1607/1559.

THE BROTHERS:

A

TRAGEDY.

BY

EDWARD YOUNG, L. L. D.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY J. ROBERTSON.

M,DCC,LXXIV.

30
69
SEP

PROLOGUE.

Written by Mr DODSLEY, and ſpoken by Mr HAVARD.

THE Tragic Muſe, revolving many a page
Of time's long records drawn from every age,
Forms not her plans on low or trivial deeds,
But marks the ſtriking!——When ſome hero bleeds
To ſave his country, then her powers inſpire,
And ſouls congenial catch the patriot fire.———
When bold oppreſſion grinds a ſuffering land;
When the keen dagger gleams in murder's hand;
When black conſpiracy infects the throng;
Or fell revenge ſits brooding o'er his wrong:
Then walks ſhe forth in terror; at her frown
Guilt ſhrinks appall'd, tho' ſeated on a throne.
But the rack'd ſoul, when dark ſuſpicions rend,
When brothers hate, and ſons with ſires contend;
When claſhing intereſts war eternal wage;
And love, the tendereſt paſſion, turns to rage;
Then grief on every viſage ſtands impreſt,
And pity throbs in every feeling breaſt:
Hope, fear, and indignation riſe by turns,
And the ſtrong ſcene with various paſſion burns.
Such is our tale.——Nor bluſh if tears ſhould flow;
They're virtue's tribute paid to human woe.
Such drops new luſtre to bright eyes impart;
The ſilent witneſs of a tender heart:
Such drops adorn the nobleſt hero's cheek,
And paint his worth, in ſtrokes that more than ſpeak:
Not he who cannot weep, but he who can,
Shews the great ſoul, and proves himſelf a man.
Yet do not idly grieve at others pain,
Nor let the tears of nature fall in vain:
Watch the cloſe crimes from whence their ills have grown,
And from their frailties learn to mend your own:

Dramatis Perſonæ.

PHILIP, King of Macedon.

PERSEUS, his elder Son.

DEMETRIUS, his younger Son.

PERICLES, the Friend of Perſeus.

ANTIGONUS, a Miniſter of State.

DYMAS, the King's Favourite.

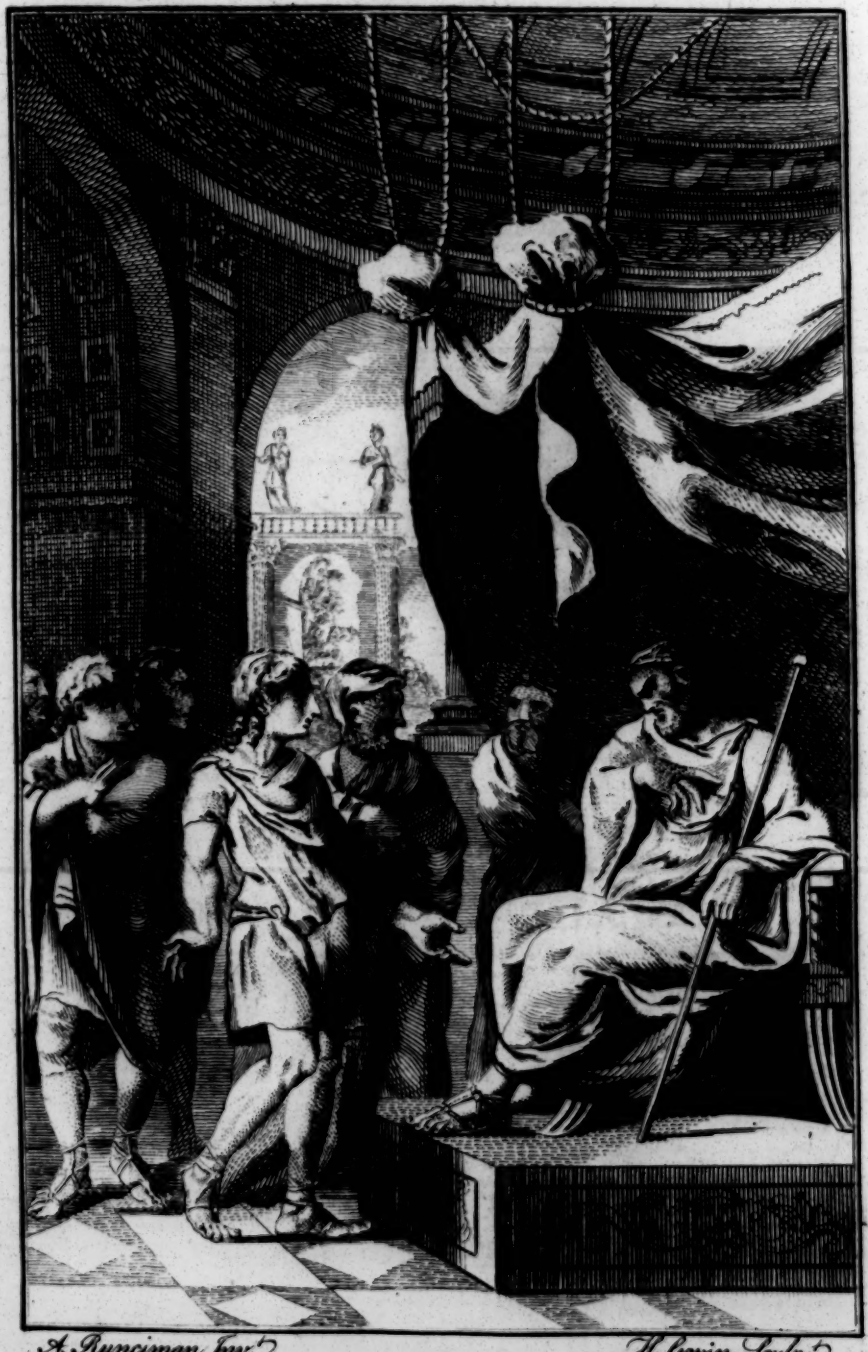
POSTHUMIUS, } Roman Ambaſſadors.
CURTIUS, }

ERIXENE, the Thracian Princeſs.

DELIA, her Attendant.

39.

12.



A. Runciman Inv.t H. Gavin Sculp.t

BROTHERS. Act 1.st

THE BROTHERS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter CURTIUS *and* POSTHUMIUS.

CURTIUS.

THERE's ſomething of magnificence about us
I have not ſeen at Rome. But you can tell me.
[*Gazes round.*

Poſt. True: hither ſent on former embaſſies,
I know this ſplendid court of Macedon,
And haughty Philip, well.

Cur. His pride preſumes
To treat us here like ſubjects, more than Romans,
More than ambaſſadors, who, in our boſoms,
Bear peace and war, and throw him which we pleaſe,
As Jove his ſtorm, or ſunſhine, on his creatures.

Poſt. This Philip only, ſince Rome's glory roſe,
Preſerves its grandeur, to the name of king;
Like a bold ſtar, that ſhews its fires by day.
The Greek, who won the world, was ſent before him,
As the grey dawn before the blaze of noon:
Philip had ne'er been conquer'd, but by Rome;
And what can fame ſay more of mortal man?

Cur. I know his public character.

Poſt. It pains me
To turn my thought on his domeſtic ſtate.
There Philip is no god; but pours his heart,
In ceaſeleſs groans, o'er his contending ſons;
And pays the ſecret tax of mighty men
To their mortality.

Cur. But whence the ſtrife,

Which

Which thus afflicts him?
Poſt. From this Philip's bed
Two Alexanders ſpring.
Cur. And but one world?
'Twill never do.
Poſt. They both are bright; but one
Benignly bright, as ſtars to mariners;
And one a comet, with malignant blaze,
Denouncing ruin.
Cur. You mean Perſeus.
Poſt. True.
The younger ſon, Demetrius, you well know,
Was bred at Rome, our hoſtage from his father.
Soon after, he was ſent ambaſſador,
When Philip fear'd the thunder of our arms.
Rome's manners won him, and his manners Rome;
Who granted peace, declaring ſhe forgave,
To his high worth, the conduct of his father.
This gave him all the hearts of Macedon;
Which, join'd to his high patronage from Rome,
Inflames his jealous brother.
Cur. Glows there not
A ſecond brand of enmity?
Poſt. O yes;
The fair Erixene.
Cur. I've partly heard
Her ſmother'd ſtory.
Poſt. Smother'd by the King;
And wiſely too: But thou ſhalt hear it all.
Not ſeals of adamant, not mountains whelm'd
On guilty ſecrets, can exclude the day.
Long burnt a fixt hereditary hate,
Between the crowns of Macedon and Thrace;
The ſword by both too much indulg'd in blood.
Philip, at length, prevail'd; he took, by night,
The town, and palace, of his deadly foe;
Ruſh'd thro' the flames, which he had kindled round,
And ſlew him, bold in vain: Nor reſted there;
But, with unkingly cruelty, deſtroy'd
Two little ſons within their mother's arms;
Thus meaning to tread out thoſe ſparks of war,
Which might one day flame up to ſtrong revenge.

The queen, thro' grief, on her dead ſons expir'd.
One child alone ſurviv'd: A female infant,
Amidſt theſe horrors, in the cradle ſmil'd.
Cur. What of that infant?
Poſt. Stung with ſharp remorſe,
The victor took, and gave her to his queen.
The child was bred, and honour'd, as her own;
She grew; ſhe bloom'd; and now her eyes repay
Her brother's wounds, on Philip's rival ſons.
Cur. Is then Erixene that Thracian child?
How juſt the gods! from out that ruin'd houſe
He took a brand, to ſet his own on fire.
Poſt. To give thee, friend, the whole in miniature;
This is the picture of great Philip's court:
The proud, but melancholy king, on high,
Majeſtic ſits, like Jove enthron'd in darkneſs;
His ſons are as the thunder in his hand;
And the fair Thracian Princeſs is a ſtar,
That ſparkles by, and gilds the ſolemn ſcene.
[*Shouts heard.*
'Tis their great day, ſupreme of all their year.
The fam'd luſtration of their martial powers;
Thence, for our audience, choſen by the king.
If he provokes a war, his empire ſhakes,
And all her lofty glories nod to ruin.
Cur. Who comes?
Poſt. O, that's the jealous elder brother;
Irregular in manners, as in form.
Obſerve the fire, high birth, and empire, kindle!
Cur. He holds his conference with much emotion.
Poſt. The brothers both can talk, and, in their turns,
Have borne away the prize of eloquence
At Athens. Shun his walk: Our own debate
Is now at hand. We'll ſeek his lion ſire,
Who dares to frown on us, his conquerors;
And carries ſo much monarch on his brow,
As if he'd fright us with the wounds we gave him.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter PERSEUS *and* PERICLES.

Perſ. 'Tis empire, empire, empire! let that word
Make ſacred all I do, or can attempt!

Had

Had I been born a ſlave, I ſhould affect it;
My nature's fiery, and, of courſe, aſpires.
Who gives an empire, by the gift defeats
All end of giving; and procures contempt
Inſtead of gratitude. An empire loſt,
Deſtroy'd, would leſs confound me, than reſign'd.
Peri. But are you ſure Demetrius will attempt?
Perſ. Why does Rome court him? for his virtues? no!
To fire him to dominion: to blow up
A civil war; then to ſupport him in it:
He gains the name of king, and Rome the power.
Peri. This is indeed the common art of Rome.
Perſ. That ſource of juſtice thro' the wond'ring world!
His youth and valour ſecond Rome's deſigns:
The firſt impels him to preſumptuous hope;
The laſt ſupports him in it. Then his perſon!
Thy hand, O nature, has made bold with mine
Yet more; what words diſtil from his red lip,
To gull the multitude! and they make kings.
Ten thouſand fools, knaves, cowards, lump'd together,
Become all wiſe, all-righteous, and almighty.
Nor is this all: the fooliſh Thracian maid
Prefers the boy to me.
Peri. And does that pain you?
Perſ. O Pericles, to death. It is moſt true,
Thro' hate to him, and not thro' love for her,
I paid my firſt addreſſes; but became
The fool I feign'd: My ſighs are now ſincere.
It ſmarts; it burns: O that 'twere fiction ſtill!
By Heaven, ſhe ſeems more beauteous than dominion!
Peri. Dominion, and the princeſs, both are loſt,
Unleſs you gain the king.
Perſ. But how to gain him?
Old men love novelties; the laſt arriv'd
Still pleaſes beſt; the youngeſt ſteals their ſmiles.
Peri. Dymas alone can work him to his pleaſure;
Firſt in eſteem, and keeper of his heart.
Perſ. To Dymas thou; and win him to thy will.
In the mean time, I'll ſeek my double rival;
Curb his preſumption, and erect myſelf,
In all the dignity of birth, before him.
Whate'er can ſtir the blood, or ſway the mind,

Is now at ſtake ; and double is the loſs,
When an inferior bears away the prize.
Peri. Your brother, dreſs'd for the ſolemnity.
Perſ. To Dymas fly ! gain him, and think on this :
A prince indebted, is a fortune made. [*Exit* Pericles.

Enter DEMETRIUS.

Dem. How, brother ! unattir'd ! have you forgot
What pomps are due to this illuſtrious day ?
Perſ. I am no gewgaw, for the throne to gaze at :
Some are deſign'd by nature but for ſhew ;
The tinſel and the feather of mankind.
Dem. Brother, of that no more : for ſhame, gird on
Your glitt'ring arms, and look like any Roman.
Perſ. No, brother ; let the Romans look like me,
If they're ambitious.—But, I pr'ythee, ſtand ;
Let me gaze on thee :—No inglorious figure !
More Romano, as it ought to be.
But what is this that dazzles my weak ſight ?
There's ſunſhine in thy beaver.
Dem. 'Tis that helmet
Which Alexander wore at Granicus.
Perſ. When he ſubdu'd the world ? Ha ! is't not ſo ?
What world haſt thou ſubdu'd ? O, yes ; the fair.
Think'ſt thou there could in Macedon be found
No brow might ſuit that golden blaze, but thine ?
Dem. I wore it but to grace this ſacred day :
Jar not for trifles.
Perſ. Nothing is a trifle
That argues the preſumption of the ſoul.
Dem. 'Tis they preſume, who know not to deſerve.
Perſ. Or who, deſerving, ſcorn ſuperior merit.
Dem. Who combats with a brother, wounds himſelf :
Wave private wrath, and ruſh upon the foes
Of Macedonia.
Perſ. No ; I would not wound
Demetrius' friends.
Dem. Demetrius' friends !
Perſ. The Romans.
You copy Hannibal, our great ally :
Say, at what altar was you ſworn their foe ?
Peace-making brother ! Wherefore bring you peace,

But to prevent my glory from the field?
The peace you bring, was meant as war to me.
Dem. Perſeus, be bold when danger's all your own:
War now, were war with Philip more than Rome.
Perſ. Come, you love peace; that fair cheek hates a ſcar.
You that admire the Romans, break the bridge
With Cocles, or with Curtius leap the gulph;
And league not with the vices of our foes.
Dem. What vices?
Perſ. With their women, and their wits.
Your idol Lælius, Lælius the polite.
I hear, Sir, you take wing, and mount in metre.
Terence has own'd your aid, your comrade Terence,
God-like ambition! Terence there the ſlave!
Dem. At Athens bred, and to the arts a foe?
Perſ. At Athens bred, and borrow arts from Rome?
Dem. Brother, I've done: Let our contention ceaſe:
Our mother ſhudders at it in her grave.
And how has Philip mourn'd? a dreadful foe,
And awful king; but, O, the tend'reſt parent
That ever wept in fondneſs o'er a child!
Perſ. Why, ay; go tell your father; fondly throw
Your arms around him; ſtroke him to your purpoſe,
As you are wont: I boaſt not ſo much worth;
I am no picture, by the doating eye
To be ſurvey'd, and hung about his neck.
I fight his battles; that's all I can do.
But if you boaſt a piety ſincere;
One way you may ſecure your father's peace;
And one alone—Reſign Erixene.
Dem. You flatter me, to think her in my power.
We run our fates together; you deſerve,
And ſhe can judge; proceed we then like friends,
And he who gains her heart, and gains it fairly,
Let him enjoy his gen'rous rival's too.
Perſ. Smooth-ſpeaking, unſincere, inſulting boy!
Is then my crown uſurpt but half thy crime?
Deſiſt; or by the gods that ſmile on blood!
Not thy fine form, nor yet thy boaſted peace,
Nor patronizing Rome, nor Philip's tears,
Nor Alexander's helmet; no, nor, more,
His radiant form, ſhould it alight in thunder,

And ſpread its new divinity between us,
Should ſave a brother from a brother's fury. [*Exit.*

Dem. How's this? the waves ne'er ran thus high before.
Reſign thee! yes, Erixéne, with life.
Thou, in whoſe eyes, ſo modeſt, and ſo bright,
Love ever wakes, and keeps a veſtal fire.
Ne'er ſhall I wean my fond, fond heart from thee.
But Perſeus warns me to rouſe all my powers.
As yet I float in dark uncertainty;
For tho' ſhe ſmiles, I found not her deſigns:
I'll fly, fall, tremble, weep upon her feet;
And learn (O all ye Gods!) my final doom!
My father! Ha! and on his brow deep thought,
And pale concern! Kind Heav'n aſſwage his ſorrows,
Which ſtrike a damp thro' all my flames of love. [*Exit.*

Enter KING *and* ANTIGONUS.

King. Kings of their envy cheat a fooliſh world:
Fate gives us all in ſpite, that we alone
Might have the pain of knowing all is nothing.
The ſeeming means of bliſs but heighten woe,
When impotent to make their promiſe good:
Hence, kings, at leaſt, bid faireſt to be wretched.

Ant. True, Sir; 'tis empty, or tormenting, all.
The days of life are ſiſters; all alike;
None juſt the ſame; which ſerves to fool us on
Thro' blaſted hopes, with change of fallacy:
While joy is like to-morrow, ſtill to come;
Nor ends the fruitleſs chace but in the grave.

King. Ay, there, Antigonus, this pain will ceaſe,
Which meets me at my banquet; haunts my pillow;
Nor, by the din of arms, is frighted from me.
Conſcience, what art thou? thou tremendous power!
Who doſt inhabit us without our leave;
And art, within ourſelves, another ſelf,
A maſter ſelf, that loves to domineer,
And treat the monarch frankly as the ſlave.
How doſt thou light a torch to diſtant deeds?
Make the paſt, preſent, and the future, frown?
How, ever and anon, awake the ſoul,
As with a peal of thunder, to ſtrange horrors,

In this long reſtleſs dream, which idiots hug,
Nay, wiſe men flatter with the name of life?
Ant. You think too much.
King. I do not think at all:
The gods impoſe, the gods inflict, my thoughts:
And paint my dreams with images of dread.
Laſt night, in ſleep, I ſaw the Thracian Queen,
And her two murder'd ſons. She frown'd upon me,
And pointed at their wounds. How throbb'd my heart?
How ſhook my couch? and when the morning came,
The formidable picture ſtill ſubſiſted,
And ſlowly vaniſh'd from my waking eye.
I fear ſome heavy vengeance hangs in air,
And conſcious deities infuſe theſe thoughts,
To warn my ſoul of her approaching doom.
The gods are rigid when they weigh ſuch deeds
As ſpeak a ruthleſs heart; they meaſure blood
By drops, and bate not one in the repay.
Could infants hurt me? 'Twas not like a king.
Ant. My Lord, I do confeſs the gods are with us;
Stand at our ſide in ev'ry act of life;
And on our pillow watch each ſecret thought;
Nay, ſee it in its embryo, yet unborn.
But their wrath ceaſes on remorſe for guilt;
And well I know your ſorrows touch your ſons;
Nor is it poſſible but time muſt quench
Their flaming ſpirits, in a father's tears.
King. Vain comfort! I, this moment, overheard
My jarring ſons with fury ſhake my walls.
Ah! why my curſe from thoſe, that ought to bleſs me?
The Queen of Thrace can anſwer that ſad queſtion.
She had two ſons; but two: and ſo have I.
Misfortune ſtands with her bow ever bent
Over the world; and he who wounds another,
Directs the goddeſs by that part he wounds,
Where to ſtrike deep her arrows in himſelf.
Ant. I own, I think it time your ſons receive
A father's awful counſel; or, while here,
Now weary nature calls for kind repoſe,
Your curtains will be ſhaken with their broils;
And, when you die, ſons blood may ſtain your tomb.
But other cares demand you now: the Romans.

King.

King. O change of pain! the Romans? Periſh Rome!
Thrice happy they, who ſleep in humble life,
Beneath the ſtorm ambition blows. 'Tis meet
The great ſhould have the fame of happineſs,
The conſolation of a little envy;
'Tis all their pay, for thoſe ſuperior cares,
Thoſe pangs of heart, their vaſſals ne'er can feel.
Where are theſe ſtrangers! Firſt I'll hear their tale;
Then talk in private with my ſons.
Ant. But how
Intends my Lord to make his peace with Rome?
King. Rome calls me fiery: Let her find me ſo!
Ant. O Sir, forbear! too late you felt Rome's power.
King. Yes; and that reaſon ſtings me more than ever;
To curſe, and hate, and hazard all againſt her.
Ant. Hate her too much to give her battle now;
Nor to your godlike valour owe your ruin.
Greece, Theſſaly, Illyrium, Rome has ſeiz'd;
Your treaſures waſted, and your phalanx thinn'd:
Should ſhe proceed, and ſtrike at Macedon,
What would be left of empire?
King. Philip! All!
I'll take my throne. Send in theſe foreigners.

SCENE *draws, and diſcovers a magnificent Throne,* PERSEUS, DEMETRIUS, *Courtiers, &c. attending.* POSTHUMIUS *and* CURTIUS, *the Roman Ambaſſadors, enter. Trumpets ſound. The* KING *aſcends the Throne.*

Poſt. Philip of Macedon, to thoſe complaints
Our friends groan out, and you have heard at large,
Rome now expects an anſwer. She ſits judge,
And will have right on earth.
King. Expects an anſwer!
I ſo ſhall anſwer, as becomes a king.
Poſt. Or more, Sir; as becomes a friend of Rome.
King. Or Alexander's heir, to riſe ſtill higher.
But, to the purpoſe. Thus a king to thoſe
That would make kings, and puff them out at pleaſure:
Has Philip done amiſs? 'Twas you provok'd him.
My cities, which deſerted in my wars,
I thought it meet to puniſh: You deny'd me.
When I had ſhook the walls of Marena,

You pluckt me thence, and took the taken town.
Then you ſent word I ſhould retire from Greece,
A conqueſt at my door, by nature mine;
And ſaid, here end thy realm; as ye were gods!
And gods ye ſhall be, ere Rome humbles me.
All this is done; yet Philip is your friend!
If this buys friendſhip, where can ye find foes?
In what regard will ſtern Rome look upon me?
If as a friend; too precious let her hold
Her own eſteem, to caſt a ſtain on mine:
If as an enemy, let her proceed,
And do as ſhe has done; ſhe needs no more.

Poſt. The Romans do no wrong; yet ſtill are men:
And if to-day an error thwarts their purpoſe,
To-morrow ſets it right. If Philip loves
Dominion, and the pride that waits on kings,
(Of which, perhaps, his words too ſtrongly ſavour)
Humility to Rome will lead him to it.
She can give more than common kings can govern.

King. Than common kings! ambaſſador! remember
Cannæ—Where firſt my ſword was fluſht with blood.

Dem. My Lord, forbear. [*Aſide to the king.*

King. And Hannibal ſtill lives.

Poſt. Becauſe he fled, at Capua.

King. There, indeed,
I was not with him.

Poſt. Therefore he fled alone—
Since thus you treat us—Hear another charge.
Why here detain you, priſoner of your power,
His daughter, who was once Rome's good ally,
The king of Thrace? Why is ſhe not reſtor'd?
For our next meeting you'll provide an anſwer.
What now has paſt, for his ſake we forgive.
[*Pointing to* Demetrius.
But mark this well: There lies ſome little diſtance,
Philip, between a Roman and a king. [*Exeunt* Romans.

King. How ſay'ſt, unſceptered boaſter! This to me!
With Hannibal I cleft yon Alpine rocks;
With Hannibal choak'd Thraſymene with ſlaughter:
But, O the night of Cannæ's raging field!
When half the Roman ſenate lay in blood

Without

Without our tent, and groan'd, as we carous'd!
Immortal gods! for ſuch another hour!
Then throw my carcaſe to the dogs of Rome.
Ant. Sir, you forget your ſons.
King. Let all withdraw.
[*Exeunt all but the King and his Sons.*
Two paſſions only take up all my ſoul;
Hatred to Rome, and tenderneſs for them.
Draw near, my ſons, and liſten to my age.
By what has paſt, you ſee the ſtate of things.
Foreign alliance muſt a king ſecure;
And inſolence ſuſtain to ſerve his power.
And if alliances with Rome are needful,
Much more among ourſelves. If I muſt bear,
Unmov'd, an inſult from a ſtranger's brow,
Shall not a brother bear a brother's look
Without impatience? whither all this tends,
I'm ſorry that your conſcious hearts can tell you:
Is it not moſt ſevere? two ſons alone
Have crown'd my bed; and they two are not brothers.
Look here, and, from my kind regards to you,
Copy ſuch looks as you ſhould bear each other.
Why do I ſigh? Do you not know, my ſons?
And if you do—O let me ſigh no more!
Let theſe white hairs put in a claim to peace!
Perſ. Henceforth, my ſole contention with my brother
Is this; which beſt obeys our father's will.
Dem. Father, if ſimple nature ever ſpeaks
In her own language, ſcorning uſeleſs words;
You ſee her now; ſhe ſwells into my eyes.
I take thee to my heart: I fold thee in it.
[*Embracing* Perſeus.
Our father bids, and that we drank one milk,
Is now the ſmalleſt motive of my love.
King. Antigonus, the joy their mother felt
When they were born, was faint to what I feel.
Dem. See, brother, if he does not weep! his love
Runs o'er in venerable tears. I'm rude;
But nature will prevail—my king! my father! [*Weeps.*
Perſ. Now cannot I let fall a ſingle tear. [*Aſide.*
King. See! the good man has caught it too.
Ant. Such tears,

And

And ſuch alone, be ſhed in Macedonia!

King. Be not thou, Perſeus, jealous of thy brother;
Nor thou, Demetrius, prone to give him cauſe;
Nor either think of empire till I'm dead.
You need not; you reign now; my heart is yours.
Sheath your reſentments in your father's peace;
Come to my boſom both, and ſwear it there.

[*Embracing his Sons.*

Ant. Look down, ye gods, and change me, if you can,
This ſight for one more lovely. What ſo ſweet,
So beautiful, on earth, and, ah! ſo rare,
As kindred love, and family repoſe?
This, this alliance, Rome, will quite undo thee.
See this, proud eaſtern monarchs! and look pale!
Armies are routed, realms o'er-run by this.

King. Or if leagu'd worlds ſuperior forces bring,
I'd rather die a father than a king.
Fathers alone, a father's heart can know;
What ſecret tides of ſtill enjoyment flow,
When brothers love: but if their hate ſucceeds,
They wage the war; but 'tis the father bleeds.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

Enter PERSEUS.

PERSEUS.

WHY loiters my ambaſſador to Dymas?
His greatneſs will not ſure preſume to ſcorn
A friendſhip offer'd from an heir of empire.
But Pericles returns.

Enter PERICLES.

Is Dymas ours?

Peri. He's cautious, Sir; he's ſubtle; he's a courtier.
Dymas is now for you, now for your brother;
For both, and neither: he's a ſummer inſect,
And loves the ſunſhine: On his gilded wings,
While the ſcales waver, he'll fly doubtful round you;
And ſing his flatteries to both alike:

The

The ſcales, once fix'd, he'll ſettle on the winner,
And ſwear his pray'rs drew down the victory———
But what ſucceſs had you, Sir, with your brother?
Perſ. All, all my hopes are at the point of death!
The boy triumphant keeps his hold in love:
He's ever warbling nonſenſe in her ear,
With all th' intoxication of ſucceſs.
Darkneſs incloſes me; nor ſee I light
From any quarter dawn, but from his death.
Peri. Why ſtart at his death, who reſolves on yours?
Perſ. Reſolves on mine!
Peri. Have you not mark'd the Princeſs?
You have: With what a beam of majeſty
Her eye ſtrikes ſacred awe! It ſpeaks her mind
Exalted, as it is. Whom loves ſhe then?
Demetrius? no; Rome's darling; who, no doubt,
Dares court her with your empire. And ſhall Perſeus
Survive that loſs—Thus he reſolves your death.
Perſ. Moſt true. What crime then to ſtrike firſt? But how?
Or when? or where? O Pericles! aſſiſt me.
Peri. 'Tis dangerous.
Perſ. The fitter then for me.
Peri. Wait an occaſion that befriends your wiſhes.
Perſ. Go, fool, and teach a cataract to creep!
Can thirſt of empire, vengeance, beauty, wait?
Peri. In the mean time, accept a ſtratagem
That muſt ſecure your empire, or your love.
Your brother's Roman friendſhips gall no leſs
The King, than you: He dreads their conſequence.
Dymas hates Rome; and Dymas has a daughter.
How can the King ſo powerfully fix
Demetrius' faith, as by his marriage there?
For Dymas, thus, Rome's ſworn, eternal foe,
Becomes a ſpy upon his private life,
And ſurety for his conduct.
Perſ. True—but thus
Our art defeats itſelf. My brother gains
The favourite, and ſo ſtrengthens in his treaſon.
Peri. Think you, he'll wed her? No; the Princeſs' eye
Makes no ſuch ſhort-liv'd conqueſt. He'll refuſe,
And thus effect what I have ſtrove in vain:

Yes,

Yes, he'll refuſe; and Dymas, in his wrath,
Will liſt for us, and vengeance—Then the king
Will, doubtleſs, much reſent his ſon's refuſal;
And thus we kindle the whole court againſt him.

Perſ. My precious friend, I thank thee. I take wing
On ardent hope: I think it cannot fail.
Go, make thy court to Dymas with this ſcheme: [*Ex.*P.
Begone—Erixene!—I'll feed her pride [*Looking out.*
Once more, but not expend my breath in vain.
This meeting ſtamps unalterable fate;
I will wed her, or vengeance.

Enter ERIXENE *and* DELIA.

O Erixene!
O Princeſs! colder than your Thracian ſnows!
See Perſeus, who ne'er ſtoop'd but to the gods,
Proſtrate before you. Fame, and empire ſue.
Why have I conquer'd?—Becauſe you are fair.
What's empire—but a title to adore you.
Why do I number in my lineage high
Heroes and gods?—that you, ſcarce leſs divine,
Without a bluſh may liſten to my vows.
My anceſtor ſubdu'd the world. I dare
Beyond his pride, and graſp at more, in you.
Obdurate maid! or turn, or I expire.

Erix. If love, my Lord, is choice, who loves in vain
Should blame himſelf alone; and if 'tis fate,
'Tis fate in all: why then your blame on me?
My crown's precarious, thro' the chance of war;
But ſure my heart's my own. Each villager
Is queen of her affections, and can vent
Her arbitrary ſighs where-e'er ſhe pleaſes.
Shall then the daughter of a race of kings——

Perſ. Madam, you juſtly blame the chance of war:
The gods have been unkind: I am not ſo.
No! Perſeus comes to counter-balance fate.
Thrace ne'er was conquer'd,—if you ſmile on me.
Silent! obdurate ſtill! as cold as death!
But 'tis Demetrius——

Erix. Prince, I take your meaning.
But, if you truly think his worth prevails,
How ſtrange is your requeſt!

Perſ.

Perſ. No, Madam; no;
Tho' love has hurt my mind, I ſtill can judge
What ſprings controul the paſſions of the great.
Ambition is firſt miniſter of ſtate;
Love's but a ſecond in the cabinet:
Nor can he feather there his unfledg'd ſhaft
But from ambition's wing: but you conceive
More ſanguine hopes, from him whom Rome ſupports,
Than me. You view Demetrius on my throne;
And thence he ſhines, indeed, his charms from thence
Tranſpierce your ſoul, enamour'd of dominion.
Erix. Why, now you ſhew me your profound eſteem!
Demetrius' guilt alone has charms for me;
'Tis not the prince, but traitor wins my love.
Such inſults are not brookt by royal minds,
Howe'er their fortunes ebb; and tho' I mourn,
An orphan, and a captive, gods there are——
Fear then an orphan's, and a captive's wrong.
Perſ. Your cruel treatment of my paſſion——
But I'll not talk.—— This, Madam; only this——
Think not the cauſe, the curſed cauſe of all,
Shall laugh ſecure, and triumph in my pangs.
No; by the torments of an heart on fire,
She gluts my vengeance, who defrauds my love! [*Exit.*
Erix. What have I done? in what a whirlwind rage
Has ſnatch'd him hence on ill? I frown on Perſeus,
And kill Demetrius.
Del. Madam, ſee the prince.

Enter DEMETRIUS.

Erix. Ah, Prince! the tempeſt, which ſo long has lour'd,
Is now full ripe, and burſting o'er your head.
This moment Perſeus' malice flam'd before me;
Victorious rage broke thro' his wonted guard,
And menac'd loud your ruin. Fly, O fly!
This inſtant.
Dem. To what refuge?
Erix. Rome extends
Her longing arms to claſp you for her own.
Dem. Madam, 'tis prudent; I confeſs it is:

But

But is it loving as true lovers ought,
To be ſo very prudent in our love?
I boaſt not ſo much wiſdom: I prefer
Death at your feet, before the world without you.
Erix. In danger thus extreme——
Dem. Oh! moſt belov'd!
Lov'd you like me, like me would you diſcern,
That I but execute my brother's purpoſe
By ſuch a flight. At that his clamour, rage,
And menace aim, to chace a rival hence,
And keep the field alone. Oh! ſhall I leave him
To gaze whole days; to learn to read your eye;
To ſtudy your delights; to chide the wind's
Too rude approach; to bid the ground be ſmooth;
To follow, like your ſhadow, where you go;
Tread in your ſteps; perhaps—to touch your hand!
O death! to miniſter in little things;
From half a glance to propheſy your will,
And do it, ere well form'd in your own mind!
Gods! gods! while worlds divide me from my princeſs,
That, ſhould ſhe call, Demetrius might grow old,
Ere he could reach her feet.
Erix. If Perſeus' love
Pains you, it pains me more. Is your heart griev'd?
Mine is tormented: but ſince Philip's ſelf
Is love's great advocate, a flat refuſal
But blows their rage, and haſtens your deſtruction.
Had I not that to fear! were you ſecure!
I'd eaſe my boſom of its full diſdain,
And daſh this bold preſumer on his birth.
But, ſee! the grand proceſſion.
Dem. We muſt join it.

Enter the KING, PERSEUS, Romans, ANTIGONUS, *&c.*

King. Let the proceſſion halt! and here be paid,
Before yon flaming altar, thanks to Heav'n,
That brings us ſafe to this auſpicious day!
The great luſtration of our martial powers,
Which, from its diſtant birth to preſent time,
Unfolds the glories of this ancient empire,
And throngs the pride of ages in an hour.

Poſt. What figure's that, O Philip! which precedes?
[*Pointing.*

King. The founder of our empire, furious ſon
Of great Alcides. We're ally'd to heaven;
And you, I think, call Romulus a god.——
That, Philip, ſecond of our name; and here,
O bend with awe to him, whoſe red right hand
Hurl'd proud Darius like a ſtar from heaven,
With leſſer lights around him, flaming down,
And bid the laurel'd ſons of Macedonia
Drink their own Ganges.

Perſ. Give him his helmet, brother.
[*Aſide to* Demetrius.

King. You lead the troops that join in mock encounter:
And in no other may you ever meet! [*To his Sons.*
But march one way, and drive the world before you.
The victor, as our ancient rites decree,
Muſt hold a feaſt, and triumph in the bowl.

Dem. Hong, my Lord, to ſee the charge begin:
The brandiſh'd faulchion, and the claſhing helm,
Tho' but in ſport; it is a ſport for men.
Raw Alexander thus began his fame,
And overthrew Darius, firſt, at home.
We'll practiſe o'er the plans of future conqueſts,
While neighb'ring nations tremble at our play;
And own the fault in fortune, not in us,
That we but want a foe to be immortal.

Perſ. You have ſupply'd my wants: I thank you brother.

King. Riſing and coming forwards; Muſic.] How vain
all outward effort to ſupply
The ſoul with joy! The noontide ſun is dark,
And muſic diſcord, when the heart is low:
Avert its omen! what a damp hangs on me!
Theſe ſprightly, tuneful airs but ſkim along
The ſurface of my ſoul, not enter there:
She does not dance to this enchanting ſound.
How, like a broken inſtrument, beneath
The ſkilful touch, my joyleſs heart lies dead!
Nor anſwers to the maſter's hand divine!

Ant. When men once reach their autumn, ſickly joys
Fall off apace, as yellow leaves from trees,

At ev'ry little breath misfortune blows;
Till, left quite naked of their happineſs,
In the chill blaſts of winter they expire.
This is the common lot. Have comfort then:
Your grief will damp the triumph.

King. It is over.
Hear too; the trumpet calls us to the field,
And now this phantom of a fight begins.
Fair princeſs, you and I will go together,
As Priam and bright Helen did of old,
To view the war. Your eyes will make them bolder,
And raiſe the price of victory itſelf.

[*All go out but* Perſeus, *who has obſerv'd* Demetrius *and* Erixene *all this time converſing, and ſtays behind thoughtful and diſturb'd.*

Perſ. Before my face ſhe feeds him with her ſmiles;
The King looks on, nor diſapproves the crime;
And the boy takes them as not due to me,
Without remorſe as happy as ſhe'll make him.
Periſh all three! I'll ſeek allies elſewhere;
Father, and brother, nay, a miſtreſs too.
Deſtruction, riſe! Though thou art black as Night
Thy mother, and as hideous as Deſpair;
I'll claſp thee thus, nor think of woman more.
How the boy doats, and drinks in at his eyes
Her poiſon! O to ſtab him in her arms!
And yet do leſs than they have done to me.

Enter Pericles.

Peri. Where is my prince? the nation's on the wing,
No boſom but exults; no hand but bears
A garland, or a trophy; And ſhall Perſeus——

Perſ. Vengeance! [*Shout within.*

Peri. Hear how with ſhouts they rend the ſkies!

Perſ. Give me my vengeance!

Peri. Forty thouſand men,
In poliſh'd armour, ſhine againſt the ſun.

Perſ. Dare but another word, and not of vengeance,
And I will uſe thee, as I would—my brother.

Peri. Vengeance! on whom?

Perſ. On him.

Peri.

Peri. What vengeance?
Perſ. Blood.
Peri. 'Tis yours.
Perſ. What God will give it me?
Peri. Your own right-hand.
Perſ. I dare not—for my father.
Peri. You ſhall dare.
Perſ. Shalt thou dare give encouragement to Perſeus?
Unfold thy purpoſe; I'll outſhoot the mark.
Peri. Where are you going?
Perſ. To the mock encounter.
Peri. What more like mock encounter than the true?
Perſ. Enough—He's dead! 'Twas accident; 'twas error:
No matter what. Ten thouſand ſhare the blame.
Peri. Hold, Sir! I had forgot: on this occaſion,
The troops are ſearch'd; and foils alone are worn,
Inſtead of ſwords.
Perſ. An oſier were enough.
Who pains my heart, plants thunder in my hand.
Peri. But, ſhould this fail—
Perſ. Impoſſible!
Peri. But, ſhould it,
The banquet follows.
Perſ. Poiſon in his wine.
I thank the Gods! my ſpirits are reviv'd!
I draw immortal vigour from that bowl!
Peri. Nay, ſhould both fail, the field and banquet too,
All fails not; fairer hopes to fair ſucceed:
For know, my Lord, the king receiv'd with joy
The marriage-ſcheme, and ſent for Dymas' daughter.
Perſ. Then there's a ſecond bowl of poiſon for him.
Peri. Yet more: this ev'ning thoſe ambaſſadors,
Which Philip ſent to Rome, beneath the name
Of public buſineſs, but, in truth, to learn
Your brother's conduct, are expected home.
Perſ. Thoſe whom I ſwore, before they parted hence,
In dreadful ſacraments of wine and blood,
To bring back ſuch reports, as ſhould deſtroy him:
And what if, to complete our ſecret plan,
We feign a letter to his friend the Conſul,
To ſtrengthen our ambaſſador's report?

Peri. That care, my Lord, be mine: I know a knave,
Grown fat on forgery; he'll counterfeit
Old Quintius' hand and ſeal, by former letters
Sent to the King; which you can gain with eaſe.
Perſ. Obſerve—This morning, at their interview,
The Romans, in effect, inform'd the King,
That Thrace was theirs, and order'd him reſtore
The princeſs. This will give much air of truth,
If our forg'd letters ſay the Romans crown
Demetrius King of Thrace, and promiſe more.
Peri. My Lord, it ſhall be done.
Perſ. All cannot fail. [*Trumpets.*
Peri. The trumpets ſound; the troops are mounted.
Perſ. Vengeance!
Sweet vengeance calls: Nor ever call'd a god
Such ſwift obedience: Like the rapid wheel,
I kindle in the courſe; I'm there already;
Snatch the bright weapon; bound into my ſeat;
Strike; triumph; ſee him gaſping on the ground,
And life, love, empire, ſpringing from his wound.
When godlike ends, by means unjuſt, ſucceed,
The great reſult adorns the daring deed.
Virtue's a ſhackle, under fair diſguiſe,
To fetter fools, while we bear off the prize. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

Enter PERSEUS.

PERSEUS.

COWARDS in ill, like cowards in the field,
Are ſure to be defeated. To ſtrike home,
In both, is prudence: Guilt, begun, muſt fly
To guilt conſummate to be ſafe.

Enter PERICLES.

Peri. My Lord——
Perſ. Diſturb not my devotions; they decline
The beaten track, the common path of pray'r——
Ye powers of darkneſs! that rejoice in ill;
All ſworn by Styx, with peſtilential blaſts

To

To wither every virtue in the bud;
To keep the door of dark conſpiracy,
And ſnuff the grateful fumes of human blood!
From ſulphur blue, or your red beds of fire,
Or your black ebon thrones, auſpicious riſe;
And burſting through the barriers of this world,
Stand in dread contraſt to the golden ſun;
Fright daylight hence with your infernal ſmiles,
And howl aloud your formidable joy,
While I tranſport you with the fair record
Of what your faithful miniſter has done,
Beyond your inſpiration, ſelf-impell'd,
To ſpread your empire, and ſecure his own.
Hear, and applaud.——Now, Pericles! proceed:
Speak! is the letter forg'd?

Peri. This moment; and might cheat
The cunning eye of jealouſy itſelf.

Perſ. 'Tis well: Art thou appris'd of what hath paſt
Since laſt we parted?

Peri. No, my Lord.

Perſ. Then rouſe
Thy whole attention: Here we are in private:
Know then, my Pericles, the mock encounter
I turn'd, as taught by thee, to real rage.
But blaſted be the cowards which I led!
They trembled at a boy.

Peri. Ha!

Perſ. Mark me well:
The villains fled; but ſoon my prudence turn'd
To good account that momentary ſhame.
Thus—I pretend 'twas voluntary flight
To ſave a brother's blood; accuſing him
As author of that conflict I declin'd,
And he purſu'd with ardour and ſucceſs.

Peri. That's artful. What enſu'd?

Perſ. The banquet follow'd,
Held by the victor, as our rites require:
To which his eaſy nature, ſoon appeas'd,
Invited me. I went not; but ſent ſpies
To learn what paſt; which ſpies, by chance detected,
(Obſerve me) were ill us'd.

Peri. By whom? your brother?

Perſ. No; by his ſons of riot. He ſoon after,
Not knowing that my ſervants were abus'd,
Kind, and gay-hearted, came to viſit me.
They, who miſus'd my ſpies, for ſelf-defence,
Conceal'd their arms beneath the robes of peace.
Of this inform'd, again my genius ſerv'd me.———

Peri. You took occaſion, from theſe few in arms,
To charge a murderous aſſault on all.

Perſ. True, Pericles: But mark my whole addreſs:
Againſt my brother ſwift I bar my gates;
Fly to my father; and with artful tears
Accuſe Demetrius; firſt, of turning ſports,
And guiltleſs exerciſe, to mortal rage;
Then, of inviting me (ſtill blacker guilt!)
To ſmiling death in an invenom'd bowl;
And, laſt, that, both theſe failing, mad with rage,
He threw his ſchemes of baffled art aſide,
And with arm'd men avow'dly ſought my life.

Peri. Three ſtartling articles, and well concerted,
Following each other in an eaſy train,
With fair ſimilitude of truth! But, Sir,
How bore your father?

Perſ. Oh! he ſhook! he fell!
Nor was his fleeting ſoul recall'd with eaſe.

Peri. What ſaid he when recovered?

Perſ. His reſolve
I know not yet; but, ſee, his minion comes;
And comes perhaps to tell me—But I'll go;
Suſtain my part, and echo loud my wrongs.
Nought ſo like innocence, as perfect guilt.
If he brings aught of moment, you'll inform me.

[*As* Perſeus *goes off, he is ſeiz'd by Officers.*

Enter DYMAS.

Peri. Ev'n as the King?

Dym. Ev'n as an aged oak
Puſht to and fro, the labour of the ſtorm;
Whoſe largeſt branches are ſtruck off by thunder:
Yet ſtill he lives, and on the mountain groans;
Strong in affliction, awful from his wounds,
And more rever'd in ruin, than in glory.

Peri. I hear Prince Perſeus has accus'd his brother.

Dym.

Dymas. True; and the king's commands are now gone forth
To throw them both in chains; for farther thought
Makes Philip doubt the truth of Perſeus' charge.
Peri. What then is his deſign?
Dymas. They both this hour
Muſt plead their cauſe before him. Nay, already,
His nobles, judges, counſellors are met;
And public juſtice wears her ſterneſt form:
A more momentous trial ne'er was known;
Whether the pleaders you ſurvey as brothers,
Or princes known in arts, or fam'd for arms;
Whether you ponder, in their awful judge,
The tender parent, or the mighty king,
Greece, Athens hears the cauſe: the great reſult
Is life, or death; is infamy or fame. [*Trumpet.*
Peri. What trumpets theſe?
Dymas. They ſummon to the court. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *draws, the* COURT, KING, *&c.*

Enter DYMAS, *and takes his Place by the* KING.

King. Bring forth the priſoners.
Strange trial this! Here ſit I to debate,
Which vital limb to lop, nor that to ſave,
But render wretched life more wretched ſtill.
What ſee I, but heav'n's vengeance, in my ſons?
Their guilt a ſcourge for mine: 'tis thus heav'n writes
Its awful meaning, plain in human deeds,
And language leaves to man.

Enter PERSEUS *and* DEMETRIUS *in Chains, from different Sides of the Stage,* Perſeus *follow'd by* Pericles, *and* Demetrius *by* Antigonus.

Dymas. Dread Sir, your ſons.
King. I have no ſons; and that I ever had,
Is now my heavieſt curſe: and yet what care,
What pains I took to curb their riſing rage!
How often have I rang'd thro' hiſtory
To find examples for their private uſe?
The Theban Brothers did I ſet before them——
What blood! what deſolation! but in vain!

For

For thee, Demetrius, did I go to Rome,
And bring the patterns thence of brother's love;
The Quintii, and thee Scipio's: but in vain!
If I'm a monarch, where is your obedience?
If I'm your father, where's your duty to me?
If old, your veneration due to years?
But I have wept, and you have ſworn, in vain!
I had your ear, and enmity your heart.
How was this morning's counſel thrown away!
How happy is your mother in the grave!
She, when ſhe bore you, ſuffer'd leſs: her pangs
Her pungent pangs, throb thro' the father's heart.

Dem. You can't condemn me, Sir, to worſe than this.

King. Than what, thou young deceiver? While I live,
You both with impious wiſhes graſp my ſceptre:
Nothing is ſacred, nothing dear, but empire.
Brother, nor father, can you bear; fierce luſt
Of empire burns, extinguiſh'd all beſide.
Why pant you for it? to give others awe?
Be therefore aw'd yourſelves, and tremble at it,
While in a father's hand.

Dymas. My Lord, your warmth
Defers the buſineſs.

King. Am I then too warm?
They that ſhould ſhelter me from ev'ry blaſt,
To be themſelves the ſtorm! O! how Rome triumphs!
Oh! how they bring this hoary head to ſhame!
Conqueſt and fame, the labour of my life,
Now turn againſt me; and call in the world
To gaze at what was Philip, but who now
Wants ev'n the wretch's privilege—a wiſh.
What can I wiſh? Demetrius may be guiltleſs.
What then is Perſeus? judgment hangs as yet
Doubtful o'er them; but I'm condemn'd already;
For both are mine, and one—— is foul as hell.
Should theſe two hands wage war; (theſe hands leſs dear!)
What boots it which prevails! In both I bleed.
But I have done. Speak, Perſeus, and at large;
You'll have no ſecond hearing. Thou forbear.
[*To* Demetrius.

Perſ. Speak!—'Twas with the utmoſt ſtruggle I forbore:
Theſe chains were ſcarce deſign'd to reach my tongue.

Their

Their treſpaſs is ſufficient, ſtopping here.
[*Shewing his Arms.*
Theſe chains! for what? Are chains for innocence?
Not ſo; for, ſee, Demetrius wears them too.
Fool that I was, to tremble at vain laws;
Nor learn from him defiance of their frown;
Since innocence and guilt are us'd alike;
Blood-thirſty ſtabbers, and their deſtin'd prey;
Perſeus, and he—I will not call him brother:
[*Pointing to* Demetrius.
He wants not that enhancement of his guilt.

King. But cloſer to the point; and lay before us
Your whole deportment this ill-fated day.

Perſ. Scarce was he cool from that embrace this morning,
Which you enjoin'd, and I ſincerely gave;
Nor thought he plann'd my death within my arms;
When holding vile oaths, honour, duty, love,
He fir'd our friendly ſports to martial rage.
If war, why not *fair* war? But *that* has danger.
From hoſtile conflict, as from brothers play,
He bluſh'd not to invite me to his banquet.
I went not; and in that was I to blame?
Think you, there nothing had been found but peace?
From whence ſoon after ſally'd arm'd men?
Think you, I nothing had to fear from ſwords,
When from their foils I ſcarce eſcap'd with life?
Or poiſon might *his* valour ſuit as well:—
This paſs'd, as ſuits his wiſdom, Macedonians!
Who vaults o'er elder brothers to a throne:
With an arm'd rout he came to viſit me.
Did I refuſe to go, a bidden gueſt?
And ſhould I welcome him, a threat'ning foe?
Reſenting my refuſal! boiling for revenge!

Dem. 'Tis falſe.

Ant. Forbear—the King!

Perſ. Had I receiv'd them,
You now had mourn'd my death, not heard my cauſe.—
Dares he deny he brought an armed throng?
Call thoſe I name; who dare this deed, dare all;
Yet will not dare deny, that this is true.

My

My death alone can yield a ſtronger proof;
Will no leſs proof than that content a father?
Peri. Perſeus, you ſee, has art, as well as fire;
Nor have the wars worn Athens from his tongue.
Perſ. Let him, who ſeeks to bathe in brother's blood,
Not find, well pleas'd, the fountain whence it flow'd:
Let him, who ſhudders at a brother's knife,
Find refuge in the boſom of a father:
For where elſe can I fly? whom elſe implore?
I have no Romans, with their eagles wings,
To ſhelter me; Demetrius borrows thoſe,
To mount full rebel-high: I have their hatred;
And, thanks to Heaven! deſerve it: good Demetrius
Can ſee your towns and kingdoms torn away
By theſe protectors; and ne'er loſe his temper.
My weakneſs! I confeſs, it makes me rave;
It makes me weep—and my tears rarely flow.
Peri. Was ever ſtronger proof of filial love?
Perſ. Vain are Rome's hopes, while you and I ſurvive:
But ſhou'd the ſword take me, and age my father,
(Heav'n grant they leave him to the ſtroke of age)
The kingdom, and the king, are both their own;
A duteous loyal king, a ſceptred ſlave,
A willing Macedonian ſlave to Rome.
King. Firſt let an earthquake ſwallow Macedonia.
Perſ. How, at ſuch news, wou'd Hannibal rejoice?
How the great ſhade of Alexander ſmile?
The thought quite choaks me up: I can no more.
King. Proceed!
Perſ. No, Sir—Why have I ſpoke at all?
'Twas needleſs: Philip juſtifies my charge;
Philip's the ſingle witneſs which I call,
To prove Demetrius guilty.
King. What doſt mean?
Perſ. What mean I, Sir! what mean I!—To run mad;
For who, unſhaken both in heart and brain,
Can recollect it?
King. What?
Perſ. This morning's inſult.
This morning they proclaim'd him Philip's king.
This morning they forgave you for his ſake.
O pardon, pardon!—I cou'd ſtrike him dead.

King.

King. More temper.

Perſ. Not more truth; that cannot be!
And that it cannot, one proof can't eſcape you;
For what, but truth, cou'd make me, Sir, ſo bold?
Rome puts forth all her ſtrength to crown her minion,
Demetrius' vices, thriving of themſelves,
Her fulſom flatt'ries dung to ranker growth.
Demetrius is the burden of her ſong;
Each river, hill, and dale, has learnt his name;
While elder Perſeus in a whiſper dies.
Demetrius treats; Demetrius gives us peace;
Demetrius is our god, and wou'd be ſo.——
My ſight is ſhort: look at him you that can:
What ſage experience ſits upon his brow,
What awful marks of wiſdom, who vouchſafes,
To patronize a father, and a king?
Such patronage is treaſon.

King. Treaſon! death!

Perſ. Nor let the ties of blood tie up the hands
Of juſtice; nature's ties are broke already:
For, who contend before you?—Your two ſons?—
No; read aright, 'tis Macedon and Rome.
A well-maſk'd foreigner, and your—only ſon,
Guard of your life, and—exile of your love.
Now, bear me to my dungeon: What ſo fit
As darkneſs, chains, and death, for ſuch a traitor?

King. Speak, Demetrius.

Ant. My Lord, he cannot ſpeak; accept his tears—
Inſtead of words

Perſ. His tears as falſe, as they——
Now, with fine praiſe, and foppery of tongue,
More graceful action, and a ſmoother tone,
That orator of fable, and fair face,
Will ſteal on your brib'd hearts, and, as you liſten,
Plain truth, and I, plain Perſeus, are forgot.

Dem. My father! king! and judge! thrice awful power!
Your ſon, your ſubject, and your priſoner, hear;
Thrice humble ſtate! If I have grace of ſpeech,
(Which gives, it ſeems, offence) be that no crime,
Which oft has ſerv'd my country, and my king:
Nor in my brother let it paſs for virtue,
That, as he is, ungracious he would ſeem:

For,

For, oh! he wants not art, tho' grace may fail him.
The wonted aids of thoſe that are accus'd,
Has my accuſer ſeiz'd. He ſhed falſe tears,
That my true ſorrows might ſuſpected flow:
He ſeeks my life, and calls me murderer?
And vows no refuge can he find on earth,
That I may want it in a father's arms;
Thoſe arms, to which e'en ſtrangers fly for ſafety.
King. Speak to your charge.
Dem. He charges me with treaſon.
If I'm a traitor, if I league with Rome,
Why did his zeal forbear me till this hour?
Was treaſon then no crime, till (as he feigns)
I ſought his life? Dares Perſeus hold, ſo much,
His father's welfare cheaper than his own?
Leſs cauſe have I, a brother, to complain.
He ſays, I wade for empire thro' his blood:
He ſays, I place my confidence in Rome:
Why murder him, if Rome will crown my brow?
Will then a ſceptre, dipt in brother's blood,
Conciliate love, and make my reign ſecure?
Falſe are both charges; and he proves them falſe,
By placing them together.
Ant. That's well urg'd.
Dem. Mark, Sir, how Perſeus, unawares, abſolves me
From guilt in all, by loading all with guilt.
Did I deſign him poiſon at my feaſt?
Why then did I provoke him in the field?
That, as he did, he might refuſe to come?
When angry he refus'd, I ſhou'd have ſooth'd
His rous'd reſentment, and deferr'd the blow;
Not deſtin'd him that moment to my ſword,
Which I before inſtructed him to ſhun.
Thro' fear of death, did he decline my banquet?
Could I expect admittance then at his?
Theſe numerous pleas at variance, overthrow
Each other, and are advocates for me.
Perſ. No, Sir; Poſthumius is his advocate.
King. Art thou afraid that I ſhould hear him out?
Dem. Quit then this picture, this well-painted fear,
And come to that, which touches him indeed.
Why is Demetrius not deſpis'd of all,

His ſecond in endowments, as in birth?
How dare I draw the thoughts of Macedon?
How dare I gain eſteem with foreign powers?
Eſteem, when gain'd, how dare I to preſerve?
Theſe are his ſecret thoughts; theſe burn within;
Theſe ſting up accuſations in his ſoul;
Turn friendly viſits to foul fraud, and murder;
And pour in poiſon to the bowl of love.
Merit is treaſon in a younger brother.

King. But clear your conduct with regard to Rome.

Dem. Alas! dread Sir, I grieve to find ſet down,
Among my crimes, what ought to be my praiſe.
That I went hoſtage, or ambaſſador,
Was Philip's high command, not my requeſt:
Indeed, when there, in both thoſe characters,
I bore in mind to whom I owe my birth:
Rome's favour follow'd. If it is a crime
To be regarded, ſpare a crime you caus'd;
Caus'd by your orders, and example too.
True, I'm Rome's friend, while Rome is your ally:
When not, this hoſtage, this ambaſſador,
So dear, ſtands forth the fierceſt of her foes;
At your commands, fly ſwift on wings of fire,
The native thunder of a father's arm.

Ant. There ſpoke at once the hero and the ſon.

Dem. To cloſe—to thee, I grant ſome thanks are due;
[*Speaking to* Perſeus.
Not for thy kindneſs, but malignity:
Thy character's my friend, tho' thou my foe.
For, ſay whoſe temper promiſes moſt guilt:
Perſeus, importunate, demands my death:
I do not aſk for his: ah! no; I feel
Too powerful nature pleading for him here:
But, were there no fraternal tie to bind me,
A ſon of Philip muſt be dear to me.
If you, my father, had been angry with me,
An elder brother, a leſs awful parent,
He ſhould aſſwage you, he ſhou'd intercede,
Soften my failings, and indulge my youth:
But my aſylum drops its character;
I find not there my reſcue, but my ruin.

Perſ. His bold aſſurance——

King. Do not interrupt him;
But let thy brother finiſh his defence.
Dem. O Perſeus! how I tremble as I ſpeak!
Where is a brother's voice; a brother's eye?
Where is the melting of a brother's heart?
Where is our awful father's dread command?
Where a dear, dying mother's laſt requeſt?
Forgot, ſcorn'd, hated, troden under foot!
Thy heart, how dead to ev'ry call of nature!
Unſon'd, unbrother'd, nay unhumaniz'd!
Far from affection, as thou'rt near in blood!
Oh, Perſeus, Perſeus!—But my heart's too full.
[*Falls on* Antigonus.
King. Support him.
Perſ. Vengeance overtakes his crimes.
King. No more!
Ant. See, from his hoary brow, he wipes the dew,
Which agony wrings from him.
King. Oh; my friend,
Theſe boys at ſtrife, like Ætna's ſtruggling flames,
Convulſions cauſe, and make a mountain ſhake;
Shake Philip's firmneſs, and convulſe his heart;
And, with a fiery flood of civil war,
Threaten to deluge my divided land.
I've heard them both; by neither am convinc'd:
And yet Demetrius' words went through my heart;
A double crime, Demetrius, is your charge;
Fondneſs for Rome, and hatred to your brother.
If you can clear your innocence in one,
'Twill give us cauſe to think you wrong'd in both.
Dem. How ſhall I clear it, Sir?
King. This honeſt man
Deteſts the Romans: if you wed his daughter,
Rome's foe becomes the guardian of your faith.
Dem. I told you, Sir, when I return'd from Rome—
King. How!—doſt thou want an abſolute command?
Your brother, father, country, all exact it.
Ant. See yonder guards at hand, if you refuſe.
[*Aſide to* Demetrius.
Nay, more; a father, ſo diſtreſs'd, demands
A ſon's compaſſion, to becalm his heart.
Oh! Sir, comply.

Dem.

Dem. There! there! indeed you touch me!
Beſides, if I'm confin'd, and Perſeus, free,
I never, never ſhall behold her more.——
Pardon, ye Gods! an artifice forc'd on me. [*Aſide.*
Dread Sir, your ſon complies.
Dym. Aſtoniſhment!
King. Strike off his chains. Nay, Perſeus too is free:
They wear no bonds, but thoſe of duty, now.
Dymas, go, thank the prince: he weds your daughter;
And higheſt honours pay your high deſert. [*Exit.*
Dym. O, Sir, without preſumption, may I dare
To lift my raviſh'd thought?———
Dem. In what I've done,
I paid a duty to my father's will:
And ſet you an example, where 'tis due,
Of not with-holding yours.
Dym. My duty, Sir,
To you, can never fail.
Dem. Then, Dymas, I requeſt thee,
Go ſeek the King, and ſave me from a marriage
My brother has contriv'd, in artful malice,
To make me loſe my father, or my love.
Go, charge the juſt refuſal on thyſelf.
Dym. What Philip authorizes me to wiſh,
You, Sir, may diſappoint: but to take on me
The load of the refuſal——
Dem. Is no more
Than Dymas owes his honour, if he ſhun
The natural ſurmiſe, that he concurr'd
In brewing this foul treaſon.
Dym. Sir, the King
Knows what he does; and, if he ſeeks my glory—
Dem. In a degree, deſtructive of his own;
'Tis yours to diſappoint him, or renounce
Your duty to your king.
Dym. You'll better tell—
Dem. Yes, better tell the King, he wounds his honour,
By lifting up a minion from the duſt,
And mating him with princes. Uſe your power
Againſt yourſelf. Yes, uſe it like a man,
In ſerving him who gave it. Thus you'll make
Indulgence juſtice; and abſolve your maſter.

Tho' kings delight in raiſing what they love,
Leſs owe they to themſelves, than to the throne;
Nor muſt they proſtitute its majeſty,
To ſwell a ſubject's pride, howe'er deſerving.
Dym. What the king grants me——
Dem. Talk not of a grant:
What a king ought not, that he cannot give;
And what is more than meet from princes bounty,
Is plunder, not a grant. Think you, his honour
A perquiſite belonging to your place,
As favourite paramount? preſerve the king
From doing wrong, tho' wrong is done for you;
And ſhew, 'tis not in favour to corrupt thee.
Dym. I ſought not, Sir, this honour.
Dem. But would take it.
True majeſty's the very ſoul of kings;
And rectitude's the ſoul of majeſty:
If mining minions ſap that rectitude,
The king may live, but majeſty expires:
And he that leſſens majeſty, impairs
That juſt obedience public good requires;
Doubly a traitor, to the crown, and ſtate.
Dym. Muſt I refuſe what Philip's pleas'd to give?
Dem. Can a king give thee more than is his own?
Know, a king's dignity is public wealth;
On that ſubſiſts the nation's fame, and power.
Shall fawning ſycophants, to plump themſelves,
Eat up their maſter, and dethrone his glory?
What are ſuch wretches? what, but vapours foul,
From fens and bogs, by royal beams exhal'd,
That radiance intercepting, which ſhould cheer
The land at large? hence ſubjects hearts grow cold,
And frozen loyalty forgets to flow:
But, then 'tis flipp'ry ſtanding for the minion:
Stains on his ermin, to their royal maſter,
Such miſcreants are; not jewels in his crown.
If you perſiſt, Sir—but, of words, no more!
To me, to threat, is harder than to do!
Dym. Let me embrace this genuine ſon of empire.
When warm debates divide the doubtful land,
Should I not know the prince moſt fit to reign?
I've try'd you, as an eagle tries her young,

And

And find, your dauntleſs eye is fix'd on glory.
I'll to the king, and your commands obey.——
We muſt give young men opiates in a fever. [*Aſide.*
Yes, boy, I will obey thee, to thy ruin.
Erixene ſhall ſtrike thee dead for this. [*Exit* Dymas.

Dem. Theſe ſtateſmen nothing woo, but gold and power.
I'm a bold advocate for other love;
Tho', at their bar, indicted for a fool.
When reaſon, like the ſkilful charioteer,
Can break the fiery paſſions to the bit,
And, ſpite of their licentious ſallies, keep
The radiant track of glory; paſſions, then,
Are aids and ornaments. Triumphant reaſon,
Firm in her ſeat, and ſwift in her career,
Enjoys their violence, and, ſmiling, thanks
Their formidable flame, for high renown.
Take then my ſoul, fair maid! 'tis wholly thine;
And thence I feel an energy divine.
When objects, worthy praiſe, our hearts approve,
Each virtue grows on conſecrated love:
And, ſure, ſoft paſſion claims to be forgiv'n,
When love of beauty is the love of heav'n.

ACT IV.

Enter ERIXENE *and* DELIA.

ERIXENE.

'TIS plain! 'tis plain! this marriage gains her father:
He join'd to Rome, the crown. Thy words were true:
He wooes the diadem, that diadem which I
Deſpis'd for him. O, how unlike our loves!
But it is well; he gives me my revenge.
Wed Dymas' daughter! what a fall is there?
Not the world's empire could repair his glory.

Del. Madam, you can't be mov'd too much!—but why
More now than at the firſt?

Erix. At firſt I doubted:
For who, that lov'd like me, could have believ'd?
I disbelievd what Pericles reported;

And thought it Perſeus' art to wound our loves.
But when the good Antigonus, ſworn friend
To falſe Demetrius, when his word confirm'd it,
Then paſſion took me, as the northern blaſt
An autumn leaf. O Gods! the dreadful whirl!
But, while I ſpeak, he's with her: Laughs and plays;
Mingles his dalliance with inſulting mirth;
To this new goddeſs offers up my tears;
Yes, with my ſhame and torture, wooes her love.
I ſee, hear, feel it! O theſe raging fires!
Can then the thing we ſcorn give ſo much pain?

Del. Madam, theſe tranſports give him cauſe to triumph!

Erix. I vent my grief to thee; he ne'er ſhall know it.
If I can't conquer, I'll conceal my paſſion;
And ſtifle all its pangs beneath diſdain.

Del. The greateſt minds are moſt relenting too:
If then Demetrius ſhould repent his crime———

Erix. If ſtill my paſſion burns, it ſhall burn inward:
On the fierce rack in ſilence I'll expire,
Before one ſigh eſcape me.—*He* repent!
What wild extravagance of thought is thine?
But did he? Who repents, has once been falſe:
In love, repentance but declares our guilt;
And injur'd honour—ſhall exact its due.
In vain his love, nay, mine, ſhould groan in vain!
Both are devoted. Vengeance, vengeance reigns!
Our firſt love murder'd, is the ſharpeſt pang
A human heart can feel.

Del. The King approaches.

Enter the King, *&c.*

King. Madam, at length we ſee the dawn of peace,
And hope an end of our domeſtic jars.
The jealous Perſeus can no longer fear
Demetrius is a Roman; ſince this day
Makes him the ſon of Dymas, Rome's worſt foe.

Erix. Already, Sir, I've heard, and heard with joy,
Th' important news.

King. To make our bliſs run o'er,
You, Madam, will complete what heav'n begins;
And ſave the love-ſick Perſeus from deſpair:

That

That marriage would leave Rome without pretence
To touch our conqueſt; and for ever join
To theſe dominions long diſputed Thrace.

Enter DYMAS.

Erix. Tho' Thrace by conqueſt ſtoops to Macedon,
I know my rank, and would preſerve its due.
With meditated coldneſs have I heard
Prince Perſeus' vows; unwilling to conſent,
Before reſtor'd to my forefathers' throne,
Leſt that conſent ſhould merit little thanks,
As flowing leſs from choice than your command:
But ſince the Roman pride will find account
In my perſiſting ſtill; and Philip ſuffer;
I quit the lofty thought on which I ſtood,
And yield to your requeſt.

King. Indulgent gods!
Bleſt moment! How will this with tranſport fill
The doubtful Perſeus, after years of pain?

Dym. My Lord, I've heard what paſt, and give you joy
Of Perſeus' nuptials, which your ſtate requires:
But for Demetrius'—think of thoſe no more.
Far from accepting ſuch a load of glory,
I bring, I bring, my Lord, this forfeit head
Due to my bold refuſal.

King. Dares the boy
Fall from his promiſe; and impoſe on thee
Forc'd diſobedience to my royal pleaſure?

Dym. No, my moſt honour'd Lord, there, there's my crime:
Fond of the maid, with ardour he preſt on;
But ſhould I dare pollute his blood with mine?
But you, Sir, authorize it—ſtill more baſe,
To wrong a maſter ſo profuſely kind.

King. That man is noble on whom Philip ſmiles.
Come, come, there's ſomething more in this.—Explain.

Dym. Why am I forc'd on this ungrateful office?
Yet can't I tell you more than fame has told;
Which ſays Demetrius is in league with Rome.
Why weds ambition then an humble maid,
But to gain me to treaſon? What then follows?
They'll ſay the ſubtile ſtateſman plann'd this marriage,

To

To raiſe his blood into his maſter's throne.
No, Sir, preſerve my fame, let life ſuffice.

Enter PERICLES.

Peri. Sir, your ambaſſador's arriv'd from Rome.——
[*Preſents a letter.*

King. Ha! I muſt read it—this will tell me more.
[*After reading it.*

O Princeſs! Now our only comfort flows
From your indulgence to my better ſon.
This dreadful news precipitates my wiſh.
To keep rapacious Rome from ſeizing Thrace,
You cannot wed too ſoon: my fair ally!
What if you bleſs me, and my ſon to-morrow!

Erix. Since you requeſt, and your affairs demand it,
Without a bluſh—I think I may comply.

King. O daughter! but no more—The gods will thank you!
I go to bleſs my Perſeus with the news.

Dym. Thus the boy's dead in empire and in love.
[*Exeunt* King, Dymas, *&c.*

Erix. I triumph! I'm reveng'd! I reign! I reign!
Nor thank Demetrius' treaſon for a crown.
Love is our own cauſe, honour is the gods.
I can be glorious without happineſs;
But without glory never can be bleſt.

Del. 'Tis well; but can you wed the man you ſcorn?

Erix. Wed any thing, for vengeance on the perjur'd.
I'll now inſult him from an higher ſphere:
This unexpected turn may gall his pride.
Whate'er has pangs for him, has charms for me.

Del. A rooted love is ſcarce ſo ſoon remov'd.

Erix. If not, the greater virtue to controul it;
And ſtrike at his heart, tho' 'tis through my own.

Del. I can't but praiſe this triumph; yet I dread
The combat ſtill. And ſee the foe draws near.

Enter DEMETRIUS.

Dem. Erixene!

Erix. My Lord!

Dem. My pale cheek ſpeaks,

My

My trembling limbs prevent my faultering tongue,
And aſk you——
Erix. What, my Lord?
Dem. My Lord!—Her eyes [*Aſide.*
Conſirm it true, and yet, without a crime,
I can't believe it. O Erixene.
Erix. I gueſs your meaning, Sir, but am ſurpriz'd
That Dymas' ſon ſhould think of aught I do.
Dem. Falſe are my ſenſes! falſe both ear and eye!
All, all be rather falſe than her I love!
Erix. She paſt not, Sir, this way.
Dem. Is then my pain
Your ſport? and can Erixene pretend
Herſelf deceiv'd, by what deceiv'd the king?
An artifice made uſe of for your ſake:
A proof, not violation of my love.
Erix. I thought not of your love, nor artifice:
Both were forgot; or, rather, never known.
But without artifice I tell you this;
Your brother lays his ſceptre at my feet,
And whoſe example bids my heart reſiſt
The charms of empire?
Dem. This is woman's ſkill:
You ceaſe to love, and from my conduct ſtrive
To labour an excuſe. For if indeed
You thought me falſe, had you been thus ſerene,
Calm, and unruffled? No; my heart ſays, no.
Paſſions, if great, tho' turn'd to their reverſe,
Keep their degree, and are great paſſions ſtill.
And ſhe who, when ſhe thinks her lover falſe,
Retains her temper, never loſt her heart.
Erix. That I'm ſerene, ſays not I never lov'd.
Indeed the vulgar float as paſſion drives;
But noble minds have reaſon for their queen.
While you deſerv'd, my paſſion was ſincere:
You change, my paſſion dies. But, pardon, Sir,
If my vain mind thinks anger is too much:
Take my neglect, I can afford no more.
Dem. No; rage! flame! thunder! give a thouſand deaths!
Oh! reſcue me from this more dreadful calm!
This curſt indifference! which, like a froſt

In northern ſeas, out-does the fierceſt ſtorm.
Commanded by my father to comply,
I feign'd obedience:—Had I then refus'd——
Erix. I grant the conſequence had been moſt dreadful!
I grant that Dymas' daughter had been angry.
Dem. Aſk Dymas with what rage——
Erix. You well might rage,
To be refus'd.
Dem. Refus'd!
Erix. He told your ſecret;
The King, and I, and all the court can witneſs.
Dem. Refus'd! falſe villain! O the perjur'd ſlave!
Hell-born impoſtor! Madam, 'tis moſt falſe!
Warm from my heart is every word I ſpeak!
The villain lies! Believe the pangs that rend me;
Believe the witneſs ſtreaming from my eyes,
And let me ſpeak no more.
Erix. I do believe
Your grief ſincere. I've heard the maid is fair.
Dem. Proceed; and thus indeed commit that crime
You falſely charge on me. The crown has charm'd you.
How warm this morning did you preſs my flight!
The cauſe is plain: An out-rag'd lover's groan,
And dying agony moleſt our ear,
And hurt the muſic of a nuptial ſong.
Erix. Since your inconſtancy perſiſts to charge
Its crime on my ambition, I'll be kind,
And leave you in poſſeſſion of an error,
Of which you ſeem ſo fond.
Dem. Ah! ſtay one moment!

Enter PERSEUS *and* PERICLES.

Perſ. Erixene!
Dem. Diſtraction! [*Starting.*
Erix. 'Tis well tim'd.
My Lord, your brother doubts if I'm ſincere,
And thinks (an error natural to him)
I'll break my vow to you—You'll clear my fame,
And labour to convince him, that to-morrow,
Erixene's at once, a bride and Queen. [*Exit* Erixene.
Perſ. When I have work'd him up to violence,

Bring

Bring thou the King, and pity my diſtreſs.
[*To* Pericles, *who goes out.*
Dem. On what extremes extreme diſtreſs impels me?
In things impoſſible I put my truſt;
I, in my only brother, find a foe;
Yet in my rival, hope the greateſt friend.
When all our hopes are lodg'd in ſuch expedients,
'Tis as if poiſon were our only food;
And death was call'd on as the guard of life. [*Aſide.*
Perſ. Why doſt thou droop?
Dem. Becauſe I'm dead; quite dead
To hope; and yet rebellious to deſpair;
Like ghoſts unbleſs'd, that burſt the bars of death.
Strange is my conduct?—Stranger my diſtreſs;
Beyond example both! Who e'er before me
Preſs'd his worſt foe, to prove his trueſt friend?
But tho' thou'rt not my brother, thou'rt a man;
And, if a man, compaſſionate the worſt
That man can feel; tho' found that worſt in me.
Perſ. What wouldſt?
Dem. Unclinch thy talons from thy prey;
Let the dove fly to this her neſt again.
[*Striking his breaſt.*
For, oh! the maid's unalienably mine,
Tho' now thro' rage run mad, and turn'd to thee.
How often have I languiſh'd at her feet?
Baſk'd in her eye, and revell'd in her ſmile?
How often, as ſhe liſten'd to my vows,
Trembling and pale with agonies of joy,
Have I left earth, and mounted to the ſtars?
Perſ. There Dymas' daughter ſhone above the reſt,
Illuſtrious in thy ſight.
Dem. Thy taunt, how falſe?—
I no leſs preſs your int'reſt than my own.
Think you 'tis poſſible her heart, ſo long
Inclin'd to me, the price of all my vows,
Purchas'd by tears and groans, and paid me down
In tendereſt returns of love divine,
Can in one day be yours?—Impoſſible.
Perſ. If I'm deceiv'd, I'm pleas'd with the deceit.
How my heart dances in the golden dream?
In pity do not wake me 'till to-morrow.

Dem.

Dem. Then thou'lt awake diſtracted.—Truſt me, brother!
She gives her hand alone.
Perſ. Nor need I more;
That hand's enough that brings a ſceptre in it.
I ſcorn the prince who weds with meaner views.
Her duty's mine, and I conceive ſmall pain
From your ſweet error, that her love is yours.
I'm pleas'd ſuch cordial thoughts of your own merit
Support you in diſtreſs.
Dem. Inhuman Perſeus!
If pity dwells within the heart of man,
If due that pity to the laſt diſtreſs,
Pity a lover exquiſitely pain'd,
A lover exquiſitely pain'd by you.
Oh! in the name of all the gods, relent!
Give me my Princeſs, give her to my throes!
Amidſt a thouſand you may chuſe a love;
The ſpacious earth contains but one for me.———
But oh! I rave: Art thou not he, the man
Who drinks my groans like muſic at his ear?
And would as wine, as nectar, drink my blood?
Are all my hopes of mercy lodg'd in thee?
O rigid gods! and ſhall I then fall down?
Embrace thy feet, and bathe them with my tears?
Yes, I will drown thee with my tears, my blood;
So thou afford a human ear to pangs,
A brother's pangs, a brother's broken heart.
Perſ. Pardon, Demetrius, but the Princeſs calls,
And I am bound to go.
Dem. O ſtay. [*Laying hold of him.*
Perſ. You tremble.
Dem. The Princeſs calls, and you are bound to go?
Perſ. E'en ſo.
Dem. What Princeſs?
Perſ. Mine.
Dem. 'Tis falſe.
Perſ. Unhand me.
Dem. What, ſee, talk, touch, nay taſte her like a bee,
Draw honey from her wounded lip, while I
Am ſtung to death!
Perſ. The triumph once was your's.

Dem. Rip up my breaſt, or you ſhall never ſtir.
My heart may viſit her! O! take it with you.
Have I not ſeen her, where ſhe has not been?
Have I not claſp'd her ſhadow? Trod her ſteps?
Tranſported trod! as if they led to heav'n?
Each morn my life I lighted at her eye,
And, every evening, at its cloſe expir'd—
[*Burſts into tears.*

Perſ. Fie! thou'rt a Roman; can a Roman weep?
Sure Alexander's helmet can ſuſtain
Far heavier ſtrokes than theſe. For ſhame, Demetrius,
E'en ſnatch up the next ſabin in thy way,
'Twill do as well. [*Going.*

Dem. By heav'n you ſhall not ſtir.
Long as I live, I ſtand a world between you,
And keep you diſtant as the poles, aſunder.
Who takes my love, in mercy takes my life;
Thy bloody paſs cleave thro' thy brother's breaſt.
I beg, I challenge, I provoke my death.
[*Lays his hand upon his ſword.*

Enter KING, DYMAS, *and* PERICLES.

Perſ. You will not murder me?
Dem. Yes! you and all.
King. How like a tyger foaming o'er his prey!—
Perſ. Now, Sir, believe your eye, believe your ear,
And ſtill believe me perjur'd as this morning.
King. Heav'n's wrath's exhauſted; there's no more to fear.
My darling ſon found criminal in all.
Dem. That villain there to blaſt me! Yes, I'll ſpeak;
For what have I to fear, who feel the worſt?
'Tis time the truth were known. That villain, Sir,
Has cleft my heart, and laughs to ſee it bleed;
But his confeſſion ſhall redeem my fame,
And reinthrone me in my Princeſs' ſmile;
Or I'll return that falſe embrace he gave me,
And ſtab him in your ſight.
King. Hold, inſolent!
Where's your reſpect to me?
Dem. O, Royal Sir!
That has undone me. Thro' reſpect I gave

A feign'd conſent, which this black artifice
Has turn'd to my deſtruction. I refus'd
That ſlave's, that curſed ſlave, that ſtateſman's daughter,
And he pretends ſhe was refus'd by me.
Hence, hence, this deſolation. Nought I fear,
Tho' nature groans her laſt. And ſhall he then
Eſcape and triumph?

King. Guards there! ſeize the Prince!
The man you menace you ſhall learn to fear.

Dym. Hold, Sir! not this for me! It is your ſon;
What is my life, tho' pour'd upon your feet?

King. Is this a ſon?

Dem. No, Sir, my crime's too great,
Which dares to vindicate a father's honour,
To catch the glories of a falling crown,
And ſave it from pollution. But I've done.
I die, unleſs my Princeſs is reſtor'd, [*Pointing to* Dym.
And if I die, by heav'n, and earth, and hell!
His ſordid blood ſhall mingle with the duſt,
And ſee if thence 'twill mount into the throne.
O, Sir! think of it! I'll expect my fate. [*Exit* Dem.

King. And thou ſhalt have it.

Dym. How, my Lord; in tears!

King. As if the gods came down in evidence!
How may ſudden rays of proof concur
To my conviction? Was e'er equal boldneſs?
But 'tis no wonder from a brother king;
[*Produces the forg'd letter.*
This king of Thrace—— To-morrow he'll be king
Of Macedon.—— He therefore dies to-night.
[*Aſide to* Dymas.

Perſ. And yet I doubt it; for I know his fondneſs.
Thou practiſe well the leſſon I have taught thee,
While I put on a ſolemn face of woe,
Afflicted for a brother's early fall.—
Heav'n knows with what regret.—But, Sir, your ſafety—
[*Preſenting the Mandate for* Demetrius's *Death.*

King. What giv'ſt thou here?

Dym. Your paſſport to renown.
You ſign your apotheoſis in that.
What ſcales the ſkies, but zeal for public good?

Perſ. How god-like mercy?

Dym.

Dym. Mercy to mankind,
By treaſon aw'd.
King. Muſt then thy brother bleed? [*To* Perſeus.
[Dymas *ſeeming at a loſs*, Perſeus *whiſpers him, and gives a letter.*
Dym. No, Sir, the King of Thrace. [*Looking on the letter.*
King. Why, that is true——
Yet who, if not a father, ſhould forgive?
Dym. Who, Sir, if not a Philip, ſhould be juſt?
King. Is't not my ſon? [*To* Dymas.
Dym. If not, far leſs his guilt.
King. Is't not my t'other Perſeus? [*To* Perſeus.
Perſ. Sir, I thank you.
That ſeeks your crown, and life.
King. And life!
Dym. No, Sir;
He'll only take your crown; you ſtill may live.
King. Heav'n blaſt thee for that thought.
Perſ. Why ſhakes my father?
King. It ſtabs, it gnaws, it harrows up my ſoul.
Is he not young? Was he not much indulg'd?
Gall'd by his brother? doubted by his father?
Tempted by Rome? a nation to a boy?
Dym. O! a mere infant!—that depoſes kings.
King. No; once he ſav'd my crown.
Dym. And now would wear it.
King. How my head ſwims!
Perſ. Nor ſtrange; the taſk is hard.
Dym. Yet ſcarce for him. Brutus was but a Roman:
[*Speaking as if he would not have the King hear.*
Yet like a Philip dar'd, and is immortal.
King. I hear thee, Dymas; give me then the mandate.
[*Going to ſign, he ſtops ſhort.*
Dym. No wonder if his mother thus had paus'd.
Perſ. Rank cankers on thy tongue; why mention her?
[*Aſide.*
King. O gods! I ſee her now; what am I doing?
[*Throws away the ſtyle.*
I ſee her dying eye let fall a tear
In favour of Demetrius.—Shall I ſtab
Her lovely image, ſtampt on ev'ry feature?
Dym. His ſoul eſcap'd it, Sir.

King. Thou ly'ſt; begone!

[Perſeus *and* Dymas *in great confuſion;* Perſeus *whiſpers* Dymas.

Dym. True; that or nought will touch him. [*Aſide to* Perſ.
If, Sir, your mercy——— [*To the King.*

Perſ. O ſpeak on of mercy:
Mercy, the darling attribute of heav'n.

Dym. If you ſhould ſpare him———

King. What, if I ſhould ſpare him?

Dym. I dare not ſay—Your wrath again might riſe.

King. Yes, if thou'rt ſilent—What, if I ſhould ſpare him?

Dym. Why, if you ſhould—proud Rome would thank you for it.

King. Rome!—her applauſe more ſhocks me than his death.
O thou, death's orator! dread advocate
For bowelleſs ſeverity! aſſiſt
My trembling hand, as thou haſt ſteel'd my heart.
And if it is guilt in me, ſhare the guilt.
He's dead. [*Signs.*] And if I blot it with one tear,
Perſeus, tho' leſs affected, will forgive me.

Perſ. Forgive! Sir; I applaud, and wiſh my ſorrow
Was mild enough to weep.

[*The King going out meets* Demetrius *in mourning, introduced by* Antigonus.

[*King ſtarts back, and drops on* Dymas. *Recovering, ſpeaks.*

King. This, fate, is thy tenth wave, and quite o'erwhelms me.
It leſs had ſhock'd me, had I met his ghoſt.
This is a plot to ſentence me to death.——
What haſt thou done, my mortal foe! thrown bars
[*To* Antigonus.
Athwart my glory? but thy ſcheme ſhall fail.
As ruſhing torrents ſweep th' obſtructing mound,
So Philip meets this mountain in his way,
Yet keeps his purpoſe ſtill. [Perſ. *and* Peri. *whiſper aſide.*

Peri. I can't but fear it.

Perſ. I grant the danger great, yet don't deſpair.
Jove is againſt thee, Perſeus on thy ſide.

Ant. The Prince, dread Sir, low on his bended knee—

King.

King. This way, Antigonus.—Do'ſt mark his bloom?
Grace in his aſpect, grandeur in his mein?
Ant. I do.
King. 'Tis falſe; take a King's word.—He's dead.—
That darling of my ſoul would ſtab me ſleeping.
How dar'ſt thou ſtart? Art thou the traitor's father?
If thou art pale, what is enough for me?——
How his grave yawns, oh! that it was my own.
Ant. Mourn not the guilty.
King. No, he's innocent;
Death pays his debt to juſtice, and, that done,
I grant him ſtill my ſon; as ſuch I love him;
Yes, and will claſp him to my breaſt, while yet
His clay is warm, nor moulders at my touch.
Perſ. A curſe on that embrace. [*Aſide.*
Dym. Nay, worſe, he weeps.
King. Poor boy; be not deceiv'd by my compaſſion;
My tears are cruel, and I groan thy death.
Dem. And am I then to die? If death's decreed,
Stab me yourſelf, not give me to the knife
Of midnight ruffians, that have forg'd my crimes.
For you I beg, for you I pour my tears;
You are deceiv'd, diſhonour'd, I am only ſlain.
Oh! father———
King. Father!—There's no father here;
Forbear to wound me with that tender name,
Nor raiſe all nature up in arms againſt me.
Dem. My father! guardian! friend! nay deity!
What leſs than gods give being, life, and death!
My dying mother——
King. Hold thy peace, I charge thee.
Dem. Preſſing your hand, and bathing it with tears,
Bequeath'd, your tenderneſs for her, to me;
And low on earth my legacy I claim,
Claſping your knee, tho' baniſh'd from your breaſt.
King. My knees!—would that were all; he graſps my heart.
Perſeus, canſt thou ſtand by and ſee me ruin'd?
[*Reaching his hand to* Perſeus.
Perſ. Looſe, looſe thy hold.—It is my father too.
King. Yes, Macedon, and thine; and I'll preſerve thee.
Dem. Who once before preſerv'd it from the Thracian?

And who at Thracimene turn'd the lifted bolt
From Philip's hoary brow?
King. I'll hear no more.
O Perſeus! Dymas! Pericles! aſſiſt me;
Unbind me; diſinchant me; break this charm
Of nature; that accomplice with my foes;
Rend me, O rend me, from the friend of Rome.
Perſ. Nay then, howe'er reluctant, aid I muſt.
The friend of Rome?—That ſevers you for ever;
Tho' moſt incorporate and ſtrongly knit;
As lightning rends the knotted oak aſunder.
Dem. In ſpite of lightning I renew the tie,
And ſtubborn is the graſp of dying men.
Who's he that ſhall divide me from myſelf?
[Demetrius *is forc'd from the* King's *knees, on which, ſtarting up, he flings his arms round his father.*
Still of a piece with him from whom I grew,
I'll bleed on my aſylum, dart my ſoul
In this embrace, and thus my treaſon crown.
King. Who love yourſelves, or Macedon, or me,
From the curs'd eagle's talons wrench my crown;
And this barb'd arrow from my breaſt—'Tis done;
[*Forc'd aſunder.*
And the blood guſhes after it.—I faint.
Dymas. Support the King.
Perſ. While treaſon licks the duſt.
[*Pointing to* Demetrius *fallen in the ſtruggle.*
Dym. A field well fought.
Perſ. And juſtice has prevail'd.
King. O that the traitor could conceal the ſon!
Farewell, once beſt belov'd! ſtill moſt deplor'd!
He, he who dooms thee, bleeds upon thy tomb.
[*Exit* King.
Dem. Proſtrate on thee, my mother earth, be thou
Kinder than brother, or than father; open
And ſave me in thy boſom from my—friends.
Friends, ſworn to waſh their hands in guiltleſs tears,
And quench infernal thirſt in kindred blood.
As if relation ſever'd human hearts,
Or that deſtruction was the child of love.
Perſ. Farewell, young traitor; if they aſk below,
Who ſent thee beardleſs down, ſay, honeſt Perſeus;

Whom

Whom reaſon ſways, not inſtinct; who can ſtrike
At horrid parricide, and flagrant treaſon,
Tho' thro' a boſom dearer than his own.
Think'ſt thou my tender heart can hate a brother?
The gods and Perſeus war with nought but guilt.
But I muſt go. What, Sir, your laſt commands
To your Erixene? She chides my ſtay. [*Exit* Perſeus.
Dem. Without that token of a brother's love,
He could not part; my death was not enough.—
I came for mercy, and I find it here.———
And death is mercy ſince my love is loſt.
Alas! my father too; my heart aches for him.
And Perſeus,—fain wou'd I forgive e'en thee.
But Philip's ſufferings cry too loud againſt it.
Blind author, and ſure mourner of my death!
Father moſt dear! what pangs haſt thou to come?
Like that poor wretch is thy unhappy doom,
Who, while in ſleep, his fever'd fancy glows,
Draws his keen ſword, and ſheaths it in his foes;
But waking ſtarts upright, in wild ſurpriſe,
To feel warm blood glide round him as he lies;
To ſee his reeking hands in crimſon dy'd,
And a pale corſe extended by his ſide.
He views with horror what mad dreams have done,
And ſinks heart-broken on a murder'd ſon.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

KING, *and* ANTIGONUS, *meeting* POSTHUMIUS, *&c.*

POSTHUMIUS.

WE, in behalf of our allies, O King!
Call'd on thee yeſterday, to clear thy glory:
Nor wonder now that Philip is unjuſt
To ſtrangers, who has murder'd his own ſon.
King. 'Tis falſe.
Poſt. No thanks to Philip that he fled.
King. A traitor is no ſon.
Poſt. Heav'n's vengeance on me

If he refus'd not yeſterday thy crown,
Tho' life and love both brib'd him to comply.
King. See there! [*Gives the letter.*
Poſt. 'Tis not the conſul's hand, or ſeal.
King. You're his accomplices!
Poſt. We're his avengers!
'Tis war!
King. Eternal war!
Poſt. Next time we meet—
King. Is in the capitol.—Haſte, fly my kingdom!
Poſt. No longer thine.
King. Yes, and proud Rome a province.
[*Exit* Poſthumius, *&c.*
They brave, they make, they tyrannize o'er kings.
The name of king the proſtrate world ador'd,
Ere Romulus had call'd his thieves together.—
But let me pauſe.—Not Quintius' hand or ſeal?——
Doubt, and impatience, like thick ſmoke, and fire,
Cloud, and torment my reaſon.
Anti. Sir, recall,
And re-examine thoſe you ſent to Rome.
You took their evidence in haſte and anger.
Torture, if they refuſe, will tell the truth.
King. Go, ſtop the nuptials till you hear from me.
[*Exeunt* King *and* Ant.

ERIXENE *and* DELIA *meeting.*

Del. Madam, the Prince who fled from threaten'd death,
Attempting his eſcape to foreign realms,
Was lately taken at the city gates,
So ſtrongly guarded by his father's pow'rs;
And now confin'd expects his final doom.
Erix. Impriſon'd and to die!—And let him die.
Bid Dymas' daughter weep.——I half forgot
His perjur'd inſolence——I'll go and glut
My vengeance. O how juſt a traitor's death?
And blacker ſtill a traitor to my love.
[*Exeunt* Erixene *and* Delia.

SCENE

SCENE *draws, and ſhows* Demetrius *in Priſon.*

Dem. Thou ſubterranean ſepulchre of peace!
Thou home of horror! hideous neſt of crimes!
Guilt's firſt ſad ſtage in her dark road to hell!
Ye thick-barr'd ſunleſs paſſages for air,
To keep alive the wretch that longs to die!
Ye low-brow'd arches, thro' whoſe ſullen gloom,
Reſound the ceaſeleſs groans of pale deſpair!
Ye dreadful ſhambles, cak'd with human blood!
Receive a gueſt, from far, far other ſcenes,
From pompous courts, from ſhouting victories,
Carouzing feſtivals, harmonious bow'rs,
And the ſoft chains of heart-diſſolving love.
Oh! how unlike to theſe? Heart-breaking load
Of ſhame eternal, ne'er to be knock'd off,
Oh! welcome death, no, never but by thee——
Nor has a foe done this—a friend! a father!——
O! that I could have dy'd without their guilt.——

Enter ERIXENE.

[Demetrius *gazing at her.*
So look'd in chaos the firſt beam of light.
How drives the ſtrong enchantment of her eye
All horror hence!—How die the thoughts of death!
Erix. I knew not my own heart. I cannot bear it.
Shame chides me back; for to inſult his woes
Is too ſevere; and to condole, too kind. [*Going.*
Dem. Thus I arreſt you in the name of mercy,
And dare compel your ſtay: is then one look,
One word, one moment, a laſt moment too;
When I ſtand tottering on the brink of death,
A cruel ignominious death, too much
For one that loves like me? A length of years
You may devote to my bleſt rival's arms;
I aſk but one ſhort moment. O permit,
Permit the dying to lay claim to thee;
To thee, thou dear equivalent for life.——
Cruel, relentleſs, marble-hearted maid!
Erix. Demetrius, you perſiſt to do me wrong.
For know, tho' I behold thee as thou art,
Doubly a traitor to the ſtate and me;

Thy ſorrow, thy diſtreſs have touch'd my boſom;
I own it as a fault, I pity thee.

Enter Officer.

Offi. My Lord, your time is ſhort, and death waits for you.

Erix. Death!—I forgive thee from my inmoſt ſoul.

Dem. Forgive me! Oh! thou need'ſt not to forgive;
If impoſition had not ſtruck thee blind.
Truth lies in ambuſh yet, but will ſtart up,
And ſeize thy trembling ſoul, when mine is fled.
O I've a thouſand, thouſand things to ſay.

Erix. And I am come a ſecret to diſcloſe,
That might awake thee, wer't thou dead already.

Offi. My Lord, your final moment is expir'd.

Dem. and Erix. One, one ſhort moment more.

Dem. No; death lets fall
The curtain, and divides our loves for ever.
[*Is forc'd out.*

Erix. Oh I've a darker dungeon in my ſoul,
Nor want an executioner to kill me.
What revolutions in the human heart
Will pity cauſe? what horrid deeds revenge? [*Exit.*

Scene ſhuts. Enter ANTIGONUS, *with Attendants.*

Ant. How diſtant virtue dwells from mortal man?
Was't not that each man calls for other's virtue,
Her very name on earth would be forgot,
And leave the tongue, as it has left the heart.
Was ever ſuch a labour'd plan of guilt?
Take the king's mandate, to the priſon fly,
Throw wide the gates, and let Demetrius know
The full detail.

Enter ERIXENE *and* DELIA.

The Princeſs! ha! be gone; [*To the Attendant.*
While I ſtir up an equal tranſport here.
Princeſs, I ſee your griefs, and judge the cauſe:
But I bring news might raiſe you from the grave;
Or call you down from heaven to hear with joy.
Juſt gods! the virtuous will at laſt prevail.
On motives, here too tedious to relate,

I begg'd

I begg'd the king to re-examine thoſe,
Who came from Rome. The king approv'd my counſel,
Surpriz'd, and conſcious, in their charge they falter'd,
And threaten'd tortures ſoon diſcover'd all:
That Perſeus brib'd them to their perjuries;
That Quintius' letter was a forgery;
That Prince Demetrius' intercourſe with Rome
Was innocent of treaſon to the ſtate.

Erix. O my ſwoln heart! What will the gods do with me?

Ant. And, to confirm this moſt ſurprizing news,
Dymas, who, ſtriving to ſuppreſs a tumult,
The rumour of Demetrius' flight had rais'd,
Was wounded ſore, with his laſt breath confeſs'd,
The Prince refus'd his daughter; which affront
Inflam'd the ſtateſman to his Prince's ruin.

Erix. Did he refuſe her? [*Swoons.*

Ant. Quite o'ercome with joy!
Tranſported out of life!—The gods reſtore her!

Erix. Ah! why recall me? This is a new kind
Of murder; moſt ſevere! that dooms to life.

Ant. Fair Princeſs, you confound me.

Erix. Am I fair?
Am I a princeſs? Love and empire mine?
Gay, gorgeous viſions dancing in my ſight!——
No; here I ſtand, a naked ſhip-wreck'd wretch,
Cold, trembling, pale, ſpent, helpleſs, hopeleſs, mad!
Caſt on a ſhore as cruel as the waves.
O'er-hung with rugged rocks, too ſteep to climb;
The mountain billows loud, come foaming in
Tremendous; and confound, ere they devour.

Ant. Madam, the king abſolves you from your vow.

Erix. For me, it matters not; but oh! the Prince.—
When he had ſhot the gulph of his deſpair;
Emerging into all the light of heav'n;
His heart high beating with well-grounded hope;
Then, to make ſhipwreck of his happineſs,
Like a poor wretch that has eſcap'd the ſtorm,
And ſwam to what he deems an happy iſle,
When lo! the ſavage natives drink his blood.
Ah! why is vengeance ſweet to woman's pride,
As rapture to her love? It has undone me.

Det.

Del. Madam, he comes.
Erix. Leave us, Antigonus.
Ant. What dreadful ſecret's this?—But I'll obey.
Invoke the gods, and leave the reſt to fate. [*Exit* Ant.
Erix. How terribly triumphant comes the wretch!
He comes, like flowers ambroſial, early born,
To meet the blaſt, and periſh in the ſtorm.

Enter DEMETRIUS.

Dem. After an age of abſence in one hour,
Have I then found thee, thou celeſtial maid!
Like a fair Venus in a ſtormy ſea;
Or a bright goddeſs, thro' the ſhades of night,
Dropt from the ſtars, to theſe bleſt arms again?
How exquiſite is pleaſure after pain!
Why throbs my heart ſo turbulently ſtrong,
Pain'd at thy preſence, thro' redundant joy,
Like a poor miſer, beggar'd by his ſtore?
Erix. Demetrius, joy and ſorrow dwell too near.
Dem. Talk not of ſorrow, leſt the gods reſent,
As under-priz'd, ſo loud a call to joy.
I live, I love, am lov'd; I have her here!
Rapture in preſent, and in proſpect, more!
No rival, no deſtroyer, no deſpair!
For jealouſies, for partings, groans, and death,
A train of joys, the gods alone can name!
When heav'n deſcends in bleſſings ſo profuſe,
So ſudden, ſo ſurpaſſing hope's extreme,
Like the ſun burſting from the midnight gloom,
'Tis impious to be niggards in delight;
Joy becomes duty; heav'n calls for ſome exceſs,
And tranſport flames our incenſe to the ſkies.
Erix. Tranſport, how dreadful!
Dem. Turns Erixene?
Can ſhe not bear the ſun-ſhine of our fate?
Meridian happineſs is pour'd around us;
The laughing loves deſcend in ſwarms upon us,
And where we tread is an eternal ſpring.
By heav'n, I almoſt pity guilty Perſeus
For ſuch a loſs.
Erix. That ſtabs me thro' and thro'!

Dem. What ſtabs thee?—Speak!—Have I then loſt thy love?

Erix. To my confuſion be it ſpoke——'Tis thine.

Dem. To thy confuſion? Is it then a crime?
You heard how dying Dymas clear'd my fame?

Erix. I heard, and trembled; heard, and ran diſtracted.

Dem. Aſtoniſhment!

Erix. I've nothing elſe to give thee.

[*He retires in Aſtoniſhment; ſhe in Agony; and both are ſilent for ſome Time.*]

He is ſtruck dumb—Nor can I ſpeak.—Yet muſt I.——
I tremble on the brink; yet muſt plunge in——
Know, my Demetrius! Joys are for the gods;
Man's common courſe of nature is diſtreſs:
His joys are prodigies; and like them, too,
Portend approaching ill. The wiſe man ſtarts,
And trembles at the perils of a bliſs.
To hope, how bold? How daring to be fond,
When, what our fondneſs graſps, is not immortal?—
I will preſume on thy known, ſteady virtue,
And treat thee like a man; I will, Demetrius!
Nor longer in my boſom hide a brand,
That burns unſeen, and drinks my vital blood.

Dem. What myſtery! [*Here a ſecond Pauſe in both.*

Erix. The blackeſt——

Dem. How every terror doubles in the dark!
Why, muffled up in ſilence ſtands my fate?
This horrid ſpectre let me ſee at once,
And ſhew if I'm a man.

Erix. It calls for more.

Dem. It calls for me, then; love has made me more.

Erix. O fortify thy ſoul with more than love;
To hear, what heard, thou'lt curſe the tongue that tells thee.

Dem. Curſe whom? Curſe thee!

Erix. Yes, from thy inmoſt ſoul.
Why doſt thou lift thine eyes and hands to heav'n?
The pow'rs, moſt conſcious of this deed, reſide
In darkneſs, howl below in raging fires,
Where pangs like mine corrode them.—Thence ariſe,
Black gods of execration and deſpair!
Thro' dreadful earthquakes cleave your upward way,

While nature ſhakes, and vapours blot the ſun;
Then thro' thoſe horrors in loud groans proclaim,
That I am ———

Dem. What?—I'll have it, tho' it blaſt me.

Erix. Thus then in thunder—I am Perſeus' wife!

[Demetrius *falls againſt the Scene.* [*After a Pauſe.*

Dem. In thunder!—No; that had not ſtruck ſo deep.
What tempeſt e'er diſcharg'd ſo fierce a fire?—
Calm and deliberate anguiſh feeds upon me.
Each thought ſent out for help brings in new woe.
Where ſhall I turn? where flie? to whom but thee?
[*Kneeling.*
Tremendous Jove! whom mortals will not know
From bleſſings, but compel to be ſevere,
I feel thy vengeance, and adore thy power.
I ſee my failings, and abſolve thy rage.
But, Oh! I muſt perceive the load that's on me;
I can't but tremble underneath the ſtroke.
Aid me to bear!—But ſince it can't be borne,
Oh, let thy mercy burſt in flames upon me!
Thy triple bolt is healing balm to this.
This pain unfelt, unfancy'd by the wretch,
The groaning wretch, that on the wheel expires.

Erix. Why did I tell thee?

Dem. Why commit a deed
Too ſhocking to be told? What fumes of hell
Flew to thy brain? What fiend the crime inſpir'd?

Erix. Perſeus, laſt night, as ſoon as thou waſt fled,
At that dead hour, when good men are at reſt,
When every crime and horror is abroad,
Graves yawn, fiends yell, wolves howl, and ravens ſcream.
Than ravens, wolves, or fiends, more fatal far;
To me he came, and threw him at my feet,
And wept, and ſwore unleſs I gave conſent
To call a prieſt that moment, all was ruin'd.
That the next day, Demetrius and his powers
Might conquer, he loſe me, and I my crown,
Confer'd by Philip but on Perſeus' wife.
I ſtarted, trembled, fainted; he invades
My half-recover'd ſtrength, brib'd prieſts conſpire,
All urg'd my vow, all ſeiz'd my raviſh'd hand,

Invok'd

Invok'd the gods, run o'er the haſty rite;
While each ill omen of the ſky flew o'er us,
And furies howl'd our nuptial ſong below.——
Can'ſt thou forgive?

Dem. By all the flames of love,
And torments of deſpair, I never can.
The furies toſs their torches from thy hand,
And all their adders hiſs around thy head!
I'll ſee thy face no more!

Erix. Thy rage is juſt.
Yet ſtay and hear me. [*She kneels and holds him.*

Dem. I have heard too much.

Erix. 'Till thou haſt heard the whole, O do not curſe me!

Dem. Where can I find a curſe to reach thy crime?

Erix. Mercy! [*Weeping.*

Dem. aſide.] Her tears, like drops of molten lead,
With torment burn their paſſage to my heart.
And yet ſuch violation of her vows———

Erix. Mercy!

Dem. Perſeus!—— [*Stamping.*

Erix. Stamp 'till the center ſhakes,
So black a dæmon ſhalt thou never raiſe.
Perſeus! Can'ſt thou abhor him more than I?
Hell has its furies, Perſeus has his love,
And, oh! Demetrius his eternal hate.

Dem. Eternal! yes, eternal and eternal,
As deep, and everlaſting as my pain.

Erix. Some god deſcend and ſooth his ſoul to peace!

Dem. Talk'ſt thou of peace; what peace haſt thou beſtow'd?
A brain diſtracted, and a broken heart.
Talk'ſt thou of peace? Hark, hark, thy huſband calls,
His father's rebel! brother's murderer!
Nature's abhorrence, and thy lawful lord!
Flie, my kind patroneſs, and in his boſom
Conſult my peace.

Erix. I never ſhall be there.
My Lord! my life!

Dem. How ſay'ſt? Is Perſeus here!———
Flie, flie! away, away; 'tis death! 'tis inceſt!
[*Starting wide, and looking round him.*
[*As he is going, ſhe lays hold of his robe.*

Dar'ſt thou to touch Demetrius? dar'ſt thou touch him
Even with thine eye?
Erix. I dare—and more, dare ſeize,
And fix him here: no doubt, to thy ſurprize———
I'm blemiſh'd, not abandon'd; honour ſtill
Is ſacred in my ſight. Thou call'ſt it inceſt;
'Tis innocence; 'tis virtue; if there's virtue
In fix'd, inviolable ſtrength of love.
For know, the moment the dark deed was done,
The moment madneſs made me Perſeus' wife,
I ſeiz'd this friend, and lodg'd him in my boſom,
[*Shewing a dagger.*
Firmly reſolv'd I never would be more.
And now I fling me at thy feet, imploring
Thy ſteadier hand to guide him to my heart.
Who wed in vengeance, wed not but to die.
Dem. Has Perſeus then an hymeneal claim?
And no divorce, but death?—and death from me,
Who ſhould defend thee from the world in arms?
O thou ſtill excellent! ſtill moſt belov'd!
Erix. Life is the foe that parts us; death, a friend,
All knots diſſolving, joins us; and for ever.
Why ſo diſorder'd? Wherefore ſhakes thy frame?
Look on me; do I tremble? am I pale?
When I let looſe a ſigh, I'll pardon thine.
Take my example, and be bravely wretched.
True grandeur riſes from ſurmounted ills;
The wretched only can be truly great.
If not in kindneſs, yet in vengeance ſtrike;
'Tis not Erixene, 'tis Perſeus' wife.
Thoul't not reſign me?
Dem. Not to Jove.
Erix. Then ſtrike.
Dem. How can I ſtrike?
[*Gazing on her with aſtoniſhment.*
Stab at the face of heav'n?
How can I ſtrike?—yet how can I forbear?
I feel a thouſand deaths, debating one.
A deity ſtands guard on every charm,
And ſtrikes at me.
Erix. As will thy brother ſoon:
He's now in arms, and may be here this hour.

Nothing

Nothing ſo cruel as too ſoft a ſoul;
This is ſtrange tenderneſs that breaks my heart;
Strange tenderneſs that dooms to double death:
To Perſeus.
Dem. True.——But how to ſhun that horror!
By wounding thee, whom ſavage pards would ſpare?
My heart's inhabitant! my ſoul's ambition!
By wounding thee, and bathing in thy blood;
That blood illuſtrious, thro' a radiant race
Of kings, and heroes, rolling down from gods!
Erix. Heroes, and kings, and gods themſelves, muſt yield
To dire neceſſity.
Dem. Since that abſolves me,
Stand firm and fair.
Erix. My boſom meets the point,
Than Perſeus far more welcome to my breaſt.
Dem. Neceſſity, for gods themſelves too ſtrong,
Is weaker than thy charms. [*Drops the dagger.*
Erix. O my Demetrius!
[*Turns, and goes to the farther part of the ſtage.*
Dem. O my Erixene! [*Both ſilent, weep, and tremble.*
Erix. Farewell! [*Going.*
Dem. Where goeſt? [*Paſſionately ſeizing her.*
Erix. To ſeek a friend.
Dem. He's here.
Erix. Yes, Perſeus' friend.——
Earth, open and receive me.
Dem. Heav'n ſtrike us dead,
And ſave me from a double ſuicide,
And one of tenfold death—O Jove! O Jove!
[*Falling on his knees.*
But I'm diſtracted! [*Suddenly ſtarting up.*
What can Jove?—Why, pray?
What can I pray for?
Erix. For a heart.
Dem. Yes, one
That cannot feel. Mine bleeds at every vein.
Who never lov'd, ne'er ſuffer'd; he feels nothing,
Who nothing feels but for himſelf alone;
And when we feel for others, reaſon reels,
O'erloaded, from her path, and man runs mad.

As love alone can exquiſitely bleſs,
Love only feels the Marvellous of pain;
Opens new veins of torture in the ſoul,
And wakes the nerve where agonies are born.
E'en Dymas, Perſeus, (hearts of adamant!)
Might weep theſe torments of their mortal foe.

Erix. Shall I be leſs compaſſionate than they?
[*Takes up the dagger.*
What love deny'd, thine agonies have done;
[*Stabs herſelf.*
Demetrius' ſigh outſtings the dart of death. [*Dies.*

Enter the KING, *and* ANTIGONUS

King. Give my Demetrius to my arms; I call him
To life from death, to tranſport from deſpair.

Dem. See Perſeus' wife! [*Pointing at* Erixene] let Delia tell the reſt.

King. My grief-accuſtomed heart can gueſs too well.

Dem. That ſight turns all to guilt, but tears and death.

King. Death!—Who ſhall quell falſe Perſeus now in arms?
Who pour my tempeſt on the capitol?
How ſhall I ſweeten life to thy ſad ſpirit?——
I'll quit my throne this hour, and thou ſhalt reign.

Dem. You recommend that death you would diſſuade;
Ennobled thus by fame and empire loſt,
As well as life!—Small ſacrifice to love.
[*Going to ſtab himſelf, the* King *runs to prevent it, but too late.*

King. Ah, hold! nor ſtrike thy dagger thro' my heart!

Dem. 'Tis my firſt diſobedience, and my laſt.
[*Falls down.*

King. There Philip fell! There Macedon expir'd!
I ſee the Roman eagle hovering o'er us,
And the ſhaft broke, ſhould bring her to the ground.
[*Pointing to* Demetrius.

Dem. Hear, good Antigonus! my laſt requeſt.
Tell Perſeus, if he'll ſheath his impious ſword,
Drawn on his father, I'll forgive him all;
Tho' poor Erixene lies bleeding by.
Her blood cries vengeance.—Bnt my father's peace—
[*Dies.*

King.

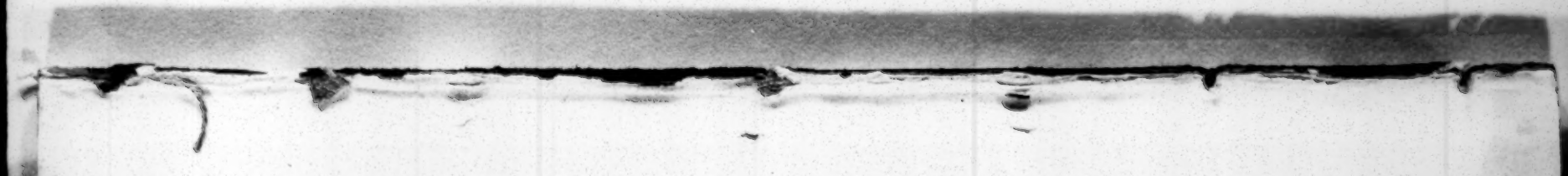
King. As much his goodneſs wounds me, as his death.
What then are both?—O Philip, once renown'd!
Where is the pride of Greece, the dread of Rome,
The theme of Athens, the wide world's example,
And the god Alexander's rival, now?
E'en at the foot of fortune's precipice,
Where the ſlave's ſigh wafts pity to the Prince,
And his omnipotence cries out for more.

Ant. As the ſwoln column of aſcending ſmoke,
So ſolid ſwells thy grandeur, pigmy man!

King. My life's deep tragedy was plann'd with art;
From ſcene to ſcene advancing in diſtreſs,
Thro' a ſad ſeries, to this dire reſult;
As if the Thracian Queen conducted all,
And wrote the moral in her childrens blood;
(Which ſeas might labour to waſh out in vain.)
Hear it, ye nations! diſtant ages! hear;
And learn the dread decrees of Jove to fear:
His dread decrees the ſtricteſt balance keep;
The father groans, who made a mother weep;
But if no terror for yourſelves can move,
Tremble, ye parents, for the child ye love;
For your Demetrius: mine is doom'd to bleed,
A guiltleſs victim for his father's deed.

AN HISTORICAL EPILOGUE.

By the AUTHOR.

AN Epilogue, *thro' cuſtom, is your right,*
But ne'er perhaps was needful *till this night.*
To-night the virtuous falls, the guilty flies,
Guilt's dreadful cloſe our narrow ſcene denies.
In hiſtory's authentic record read
What ample vengeance gluts Demetrius' *ſhade:*
Vengeance ſo great, that when his tale is told,
With pity ſome, even Perſeus *may behold.*
Perſeus *ſurviv'd, indeed, and fill'd the throne;*
But ceaſeleſs cares in conqueſt made him groan.
Nor reign'd he long; from Rome *ſwift thunder flew,*
And headlong from his throne the tyrant threw:
Thrown headlong down by Rome *in triumph led,*
For this *night's deed, his perjur'd boſom bled.*
His brother's ghoſt each moment made him ſtart,
And all his father's anguiſh rent his heart.
When rob'd in black his children round him hung,
And all their rais'd arms in early ſorrow wrung;
The younger ſmil'd, unconſcious of their woe;
At which thy tears, O Rome! *began to flow.*
So ſad the ſcene: What then muſt Perſeus *feel,*
To ſee Jove's *race attend the victor's wheel:*
To ſee the ſlaves of his worſt foe encreaſe,
From ſuch *a ſource!—An Emperor's embrace.*
He ſicken'd ſoon to death, and, what is worſe,
e well deſerv'd, *and felt the coward's curſe;*
Unpity'd, ſcorn'd, inſulted his laſt hour,
Far, far from home, and in a vaſſal's power.
His pale cheek reſted on his ſhameful chain,
No friend to mourn, no flatterer to feign.
No ſuit retards, no comfort ſoothes his doom,
And not one tear bedews a monarch's tomb.
Nor ends it thus—dire vengeance to complete,
His ancient empire falling, ſhares his fate.
His throne forgot! his weeping country chain'd!
And nations aſk—Where Alexander *reign'd?*
As public woes a prince's crimes purſue,
So, public bleſſings are his virtue's due.
Shout, Britons, *ſhout!—Auſpicious fortune bleſs!*
And cry, Long live—Our title to ſucceſs.

BM